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ROME,

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY.

ROME,

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY;

CONTAINING

A COMPLETE ACCOUNT

OF THE RUINS OF THE ANCIENT CITY,

THE REMAINS OF THE MIDDLE AGES, AND THE

MONUMENTS OF MODERN TIMES.

WITH

REMARKS

ON THE FINE ARTS, ON THE STATE OF SOCIETY,

AND ON THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS,

OF THE MODERN ROMANS.

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS

WRITTEN DURING A RESIDENCE AT ROME,

IN THE YEARS 1817 AND 1818.

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"'Tis Rome demands our tears,
The Mistress of the World, the seat of empire,
The nurse of heroes, the delight of gods,—
That humbled the proud tyrants of the earth,
And set the nations free,—Rome is no more!"

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ERRATA.

The Reader is respectfully requested to correct the few following Errata, which are indispensible to the sense or grammar:

Page 40, line 1 of the epigram, *for* "Hic venditur," *read* Venditur hic; *for* "Patri," *read* Petri.
41, line 3 of the second Italian pasquinade, *for* "Duc," *read* due.
—, 1 of the last pasquinade, *for* "cha," *read* l'ha.
—, last line, note, *for* "gaudiam," *read* gaudium; *for* "risu," *read* risus.
133, line 9 from bottom, *for* "all powerful," *read* powerful.
176, 4, *for* "harmless," *read* homeless.
221, 18, *for* "is one," *read* are one.
352, 7, after "ancient arches," insert, of the Marian Aqueduct.

ROME.

LETTER LX.

ROMAN PALACES—PALAZZO DORIA.

Palaces, to an English ear, convey an idea of all that the imagination can figure of elegance and splendour. But, after a certain residence in Italy, even this obstinate early association is conquered, and the word immediately brings to our mind images of dirt, neglect, and decay. The palaces of Rome are innumerable; but then, every gentleman's house is a palace,—I should say, every nobleman's,—for there are no gentlemen in Italy, except noblemen; society being, as of old, divided into two classes, the Patricians and the Plebeians; but though every gentleman is a nobleman, I am sorry to say, every nobleman is not a gentleman;—neither would many of their palaces be considered by any means fit residences for gentlemen in our country. The legitimate application of the word,

which, with us, is confined to a building forming a quadrangle, and inclosing a court within itself, is by no means adhered to here. Every house that has a porte cochère and many that have not, are called palaces; and, in short, under that high-sounding appellation, are comprehended places, whose wretchedness far surpasses the utmost stretch of an English imagination to conceive.

Rome, however, contains *real* palaces, whose magnitude and magnificence are astonishing to transalpine eyes; but their tasteless architecture is more astonishing still.

Though they have the great names of Michael Angelo, Bramante, Versopi, Bernini, &c. &c., among their architects; though they are built of travertine stone, which, whether viewed with the deepened hues of age in the Coliseum, or the brightness of recent finish in St Peter's, is, I think, by far the finest material for building in the world; and though, from the grandeur of their scale, and the prodigality of their decoration, they admitted of grand combinations, and striking effect,—yet they are lamentably destitute of architectural beauty in the exterior; and in the interior, though they are filled with vast ranges of spacious apartments, though the polished marbles and precious spoils of antiquity have not been spared to embellish them, though the Genius of Painting has made them her modern temples, and Sculpture adorned them with the choicest remains of ancient art—yet they are, generally speaking, about the most incommodious, unenviable, uncomfortable dwellings, you can imagine.

I know it may be said, that comfort in England and in Italy is not the same thing; but it never can consist in dullness, dirt, and dilapidation, any where. Italian comfort may not require thick carpets, warm fires, or close rooms; but it can be no worse of clean floors, commodious furniture, and a house in good repair.

In habitations of such immense size and costly decorations as these, you look for libraries, baths, music rooms, and every appendage of refinement and luxury; but these things are rarely to be found in Italian palaces. If they were arranged and kept up, indeed, with any thing of English propriety, consistency, order, or cleanliness, many of them would be noble habitations; but, in the best of them, you see a barrenness, a neglect, an all prevailing look of misery—deficiencies every where—and contemptible meannesses adhering to grasping magnificence. But nothing is so offensive as the dirt. Amongst all the palaces, there is no such thing as a palace of cleanliness. You see,—and that is not the worst,—you smell, abominable dunghills, heaped up against the walls of splendid palaces, and foul heaps of ordure and rubbish defiling their columned courts;—you ascend noble marble staircases, whose costly materials are invisible beneath the accumulated filth that covers them; and you are sickened with the noisome odours that assail you at every turn. You pass through long suites of ghastly rooms, with a few crazy old tables and chairs, thinly scattered through them, and behold around you nothing but gloom and discomfort.

The custom of abandoning the ground-floor to menial purposes, except when used for shops, which is almost universal throughout Italy, and covering its windows, both for security and economy, with a strong iron grate, without any glass behind it, contributes to give the houses and palaces a wretched and dungeon-like appearance.

It is no uncommon thing for an Italian nobleman to go up into the attics of his own palace himself, and to let the principal rooms to lodgers. Proud as he is, he thinks this no degradation; though he would spurn the idea of allowing his sons to follow any profession, save that of arms or of the church. He would sooner see them dependants, flatterers, eaves-droppers, spies, gamblers, *cavalieri servanti*, polite rogues of any kind —or even beggars,—than honest merchants, lawyers, or physicians.

The Fiano Palace has its lower storey let out into shops, and its superior ones occupied by about twenty different families—among which, the duke and duchess live in a corner of their own palace.

It is the same case with more than half the nobles of Rome and Naples. But the Doria, the Borghese, and the Colonna, possess enough of their ancient wealth to support their hereditary dignity, and their immense palaces are filled only with their own families and dependants. Not but that, though lodgings are not let at the Doria Palace, butter is regularly sold there every week, which, in England, would seem rather an extraordinary trade for one of the first noblemen in the land to carry on in his own house. Yet this very

butter-selling prince looks down with a species of contempt upon a great British merchant.

Commerce seems to be no longer respected in Italy—not even in Florence, where its reigning princes were merchants. Yet the proudest Florentine noblemen sell wine, by the flask, at their own palaces. I wonder the profits of this little huckstering trade never induced them to think of entering into larger concerns, that they might have larger returns. I wonder it never led them to remember that commerce was the source of the modern prosperity of Italy. But commerce cannot exist without freedom—a truth that princes and people have yet to learn here.

The palaces of all the ancient Roman nobility have, in the entrance hall, a crimson canopy of state, beneath which, the prince sits on a raised throne to receive his vassals, hear their complaints, redress their grievances, and administer justice. Perhaps I ought to speak in the past, rather than the present tense; but they still exercise a sort of feudal jurisdiction over their numerous tenantry—among whom their will is law.

Above the door of every palace, upon the escutcheon of the family arms, we seldom fail to see the S. P. Q. R. all that is left of the senate and people of Rome.

The gallery of the Doria Palace is reputed to be one of the best collections of paintings in Italy. It is more certain that it is one of the largest. For, along with some very good paintings, there surely are a great many very bad; so bad, that while the

revered names of the greatest masters are sounding in your ears, you involuntarily turn away with indifference or disgust.

The whole of one very large room is filled with very large paintings by Gaspar Poussin. I mention their size first, because I really think it is their chief merit. They are among the earliest and least excellent of that profound and learned master. They seem to have been executed with lightning rapidity—with the impatient haste of a man that is conscious of powers not yet fully developed, and hurries through an irksome task, that he may be at leisure to mature them by study.

Gaspar was a servant in the Doria family. He was not a Frenchman, as is generally supposed, but a Roman of low condition and untutored mind. His real name was Dughet, but he afterwards assumed the name of his brother-in-law, Nicolas Poussin, who, it is well known, came in youth to Rome, and finished his life there.

Beside this room-full, there are two landscapes by Gasper, and one by Nicolas Poussin, said to be very fine, but in lights so bad, that I never yet could succeed in seeing them.

Of the five Claudes—the "Molino" and the "Tempio d' Apollo," are exquisitely beautiful, and indisputably the finest Italy now possesses, though they are surpassed by several in England, whither the talisman of wealth has transported the masterpieces, its sullen skies forbid it to create.

The "Molino" is the most admired by connoisseurs; but I am not a connoisseur, and I am afraid

the composition of the Temple, on the whole, pleased me the most.

One of the little Claudes is beautiful; but I admired it more, till I heard that a man, sitting on a bank side, and playing the fiddle, was meant for Apollo. I cannot approve of peopling real scenes with imaginary beings. In landscape painting, when the figures are subservient, it breaks the charm, and destroys at once truth, nature, and consistency.

Domenichino's three landscapes are interesting and original. This artist, Titian, and Rubens, have proved to us, in their works, that they could have been great masters in landscape, if they had not chosen to be greater in historical painting.

How strikingly do the beauty of the landscapes, in the Communion of St Jerome, and the Murder of Peter the Martyr,* add to the effect of the painting!

The "Belisarius" of Salvator Rosa, seems a subject well adapted to his wild and gloomy genius; and yet it is by no means the happiest of his productions. His characteristic faults, especially of colouring, are more than usually apparent, and it possesses fewer of his redeeming beauties. It is too black, too heavy, dull, and exaggerated—Nature is not faithfully copied, nor pleasingly heightened; nor, after all these sacrifices to obtain it, is there true sublimity. The attempt to combine historical with landscape painting, has not been pros-

* At the Church of St John and St Paul, at Venice.

perous here; their defects, rather than their beauties, are mingled; the interest is too much divided between the hero and the scene, and we have neither a landscape nor a historical piece.

Annibale Caracci has, I think, succeeded better in the same perilous undertaking. His is a small, but beautifully composed landscape, in the foreground of which, a Magdalen is extended, at the root of an aged tree, in all the abandonment of solitude and despair. Her uplifted eyes and clasped hands, any painter could have designed; but who could have made the paleness of the cheek, the quivering lip, and the tears that tremble in the glistening eye, speak so forcibly to the heart? Annibale Caracci seldom addresses himself so directly to the feeling. He commands our approbation—he satisfies our judgment—he improves our understanding; but the strong expression of the passions, the agony of grief, terror, pity, supplication, and pathos, he has left to those who formed themselves upon his instructions—to Guido, Domenichino, and Guercino.

His La Pietà, or the Virgin and the Dead Christ, will be far more praised and valued than this little Magdalen in the Deserts. It is safer from criticism—it has far fewer faults, and beauties of a higher stamp. But is it not cold and dead? Is there no want of interest—no absence of feeling and expression in that piece of correct design and pure composition?

La Pietà is a subject which artists seem invariably to treat with established insensibility; yet surely,

in a mother embracing the lifeless corpse of a son torn from her by a premature and ignominious death, there should be more of grief, of tenderness, of melting pity, and maternal love, than we ever see in those placid, inanimated, and undisturbed Madonnas, standing over the dead body of Christ. But I must get on faster through this long gallery, or you will tire by the way.

Guercino's Magdalen, Caravaggio's Magdalen, Cignani's Magdalen, Morillo's Magdalen, and Titian's Magdalen, all differ widely from each other, and are all fine paintings in their way, though Guercino's only has the character of a Magdalen. As for Titian, though an exquisite painter of youth and beauty, he had no notion of penitence or pathos; and this Magdalen, like all his others, is a fine, fat, comely, young creature, who differs in no respect from the picture of his unrepentant mistress, that hangs up in the same collection. I beg you will admire his portrait of the great Andrew Doria, for the sake of the man as well as the painter, and I am sure you will be delighted with that exquisite painting of Luther and Calvin, with St Catherine. It is a copy from Giofgione, from whom Titian learnt much, and whose paintings live and breathe on the glowing canvas. They have a charm about them that fascinates you before them, and makes you gaze upon them with unwearied delight.

The very Antipodes of the works of Giorgione or Titian, are the cold, lifeless productions of Sasso Ferrato,—the Roman Carlo Dolce. His Holy Family here is the best, (excepting one at the

Church of Santa Sabina,) I have ever seen of his works; which are, in general, nothing but a mere multiplication of Madonnas. They bear, indeed, a curious coincidence with his name, for they always look like figures of stone.

After a long acquaintance with these cold personages, I was not prepared to expect any thing like the St Joseph of this production, which is really admirably painted.

From Sasso Ferrato turn to Raphael, and see all that Sasso Ferrato wanted. Here is a Holy Family, in his early style, before he had unlearned the instructions of Pietro Perugino; and also a duplicate, of one I well remember seeing in Lord Stafford's gallery, in his best and latest style. It is small; the figures are full length; the Virgin is bending over the children, while the infant Jesus leans against her knees. The graceful flow of outline, the beautiful composition, the harmonised splendour of colouring, the tenderness of expression; and, above all, the chastened purity and holiness, in the divine face and form of the Virgin, are Raphael's, and Raphael's alone. It is thought by many connoisseurs to be a copy, perhaps by one of his pupils; to me it seems to be original; at all events it is beautiful.

Leonardo da Vinci's Portrait of Queen Joan of Arragon, is also of disputed authenticity. I think it bears intrinsic evidence of being done by Leonardo's own hand, and if this be the copy, where is the original? It has the violet tint, and the magical ivory smoothness of his finish—the oval contour

of face—all his peculiarities; and, above all, his peculiar excellence.

Here are two of these little trumpery crucifixions, falsely attributed to Michael Angelo Buonarotti, of which we see so many in Italian galleries. His contemporary, Vasari, tells us he only painted one oil picture; but it has been my lot, in this city alone, to see some dozens of his reputed works. If his great spirit could arise, and behold the wretched paintings shewn under his name, he would assuredly annihilate with a frown the utterers of such a calumny.

Nicolas Poussin's copy of the Nozze Aldobrandini, is admirable. It was a subject well suited to that classical artist, whose enthusiastic admiration, and unwearied study of ancient painting and sculpture, made him at last enter into the true spirit of the ancients, so that his style, his figures, and decorations, even to the minutest parts, are derived from them. But with all his poetical fancy, his classic taste, his purity of composition, his original thoughts, and the correctness and science of his designs, Poussin never will be a popular painter, from his neglect of colouring.

Among a great many of Caravaggio's paintings, which adorn this collection, I noticed a St Roque and his dog in prison; for it is a picture which compels you to look at it, and to allow that it is the work of a great and original genius. But the saint is a vagabond, a coarse peasant from the lowest class of men, unennobled by his sacred mission. How well Caravaggio loved to debase the loftiness

of grand conceptions, annihilate sublimity, and, with his energetic touch, force us to dwell upon lowness and vulgarity!

A great many pieces of Guercino's, of varying excellence. Benvenuto Garofalo's two paintings, which will catch your eye by their brilliant colouring—the Casta Susanna, and six very little, but beautiful landscapes and figures, quite miniatures, by Annibal Caracci—Pan teaching Apollo to play upon the pipes, by Ludovico Caracci—a Satyr and Nymph, by Agostino Caracci, coarse, but forcible, and designed by a master's hand and mind. Albert Durer's Four Misers, (a capital painting)—Andréa Mantegna's Head of Christ—Rubens's Portrait of his Confessor—Velasquez's Portrait of Innocent XVIII., and Raphael's Portraits of Bartolo and Baldi—all these you must see; but they form a very small part of the collection, although you will probably think the list already too long.

LETTER XLI.

PALAZZO COLONNA.

THE Colonna has, by far, the finest gallery, and about the worst collection of pictures of any in Rome. The immense length and beautiful proportions of this building, the noble Corinthian columns and pilasters of giallo antico marble that support it—the splendour of its painted roof, and the lustre of its marble pavement, delight the eye with the rare union of magnificence and taste, and well accord with the ancient greatness of the "Gloriosa Colonna." So indissolubly associated is that name in my mind with the remembrance of Petrarch, and of those days of brightness in which poetry shed her revived light over the classic regions of Italy, that although the ancient palace in which he sojourned has long since been razed to the ground, his very name gave to this modern building a charm, which no palace, however splendid, could ever have possessed of itself.

Among the statues that adorn this gallery there are none worth notice except an ancient Diana, and a

small female figure reclining on her arm,—an exquisite piece of Grecian sculpture, apparently very ancient. None of the people here could give it a name, but I remember a similar figure in the Townley collection, of very inferior sculpture, which is there called a Nymph of Diana, reposing.

The Apotheosis of Homer, which Addison describes, the servants assured me, was no longer in the palace. It probably was sold at the same time the finest paintings were disposed of, which was done, we were informed, to satisfy the rapacity of the French, who levied repeated contributions upon the noble families of Rome, to an immense amount. One of the present Colonna family assigned this to me as the cause why two sides of this noble gallery, which are standing unfinished, have not been completed.

There are several fine paintings scattered through this immense palace, but so many bad ones, that the good are almost lost in the evil company among which they have fallen.

In the gallery there is a Claude, which must once have been very fine. It is called the Temple of Venus—and the beauty of the composition still charms the eye, through all the injuries it has sustained.

There are a great many of Orizonti's landscapes; some of them much superior to any of his I ever saw before. But there is all the difference between the worst of Claude Lorraine's paintings, and the best of Orizonti's, that can exist between the strains of a true poet, and the epic of a dull rhym-

ster. For Claude Lorraine's paintings are the poetry of nature; and he who ever gazed upon them without feeling in his inmost heart their beauty and their sentiment, must have a soul that would be unmoved by those emotions, not born of earth, that stir within us at the call of divine music or diviner poesy.

Descriptions of paintings are so insufferable, that I should never mention one picture, if I did not know that by noticing the good ones, I may save you in part the slavery of examining a whole gallery of bad paintings, to find the few worth admiring. But, in pity to you and to myself, I must pass over several worth notice, or we shall never have done.

There is one, a Peasant eating his smoking hot dinner, gaping impatiently to take in a huge spoonful of scalding beans, but deterred by the fear of burning his mouth,—admirably told, with infinite truth and comic effect, by Annibale Caracci.

There is another in the same style, also said to be by him, but far more like Caravaggio. It represents a Knavish Clown, with his dinner before him, grasping a flask of wine in one hand and a glass in the other, and grinning so, that he absolutely makes the beholder grin too.

I observed a fine painting, by Annibale Caracci, in a very different style—a Madonna. Albano's Rape of Europa, and Christ between two Angels—two fine Tintorettos—Christ delivering the Souls of the Blessed in Limbo, designed by Buonarotti, and painted by Marcello Venusti—and the Por-

traits of Luther and Calvin, by Titian, perhaps more interesting from their subject than their execution, though I mean no offence to that. But the picture that rivetted my attention was Guido's St Sebastian; in which, joined to his usual chaste composition, and wonderful powers of expression, he has displayed a grandeur of conception, a force and freedom of pencil, a breadth, and a rare perfection of colouring, that I have seldom seen equalled in any of his works.

From this magnificent gallery we went to the garden, in which are to be seen the ugly and uninteresting remains of the baths of Constantine, which I once before mentioned to you, and which certainly did not invite us either to explore or describe them again.

The garden hangs on the steep side of the Quirinal Hill, on the summit of which, the broken but massive fragments of an immense pediment of Parian marble, covered with the finest sculpture, repose on the soft green turf, overshadowed by an ancient pine-tree.

It was just a combination that a painter would have wished. It was more than picturesque. It was what his fancy could never have formed, but his taste must at once have selected. These two fragments are called the remains of the Magnificent Temple of the Sun, built by Aurelian, after his triumphant return to Rome, with Zenobia, the captive Queen of Syria, in his train. It is very well a thing should have a name, but the sculpture is far too fine for Aurelian's age; and, in fact, it

is merely talking at random, to say to which of the splendid edifices that adorned the Quirinal Hill, in Roman times, it belonged.

I wish the "Gloriosa Colonna" had let this ruined Temple of the Sun, or whatever temple it was, stand where it did.

But the indefatigable labours of Martin V, and the succeeding Colonna Princes, transported the noble Columns, and all the rich spoils of antiquity found here, to embellish their palace, and unmercifully hewed down the beautifully sculptured marble remains of this superb building, for the pavement of the gallery, the ballustrades of the chapel, and the chimney-pieces of the sitting rooms.

This garden has the remembrance of the Scipios attached to it. It is said, that the ancient site of their house, known even in Italian days by the name of Casa de' Cornelj, was within, or close to, that part of the garden which adjoins the Convent of the S. S. Apostoli.* But this, I think, I before alluded to.

Upon your return to the house, you will be taken through a suite of carpetted apartments, that look as if they might easily be made habitable, to see a little twisted column of rosso antico, about three feet high, which is called, impudently enough, the *Columna Bellica*, that stood before the Temple of Bellona, and from whence the arrow of war was thrown by the Consul, on the commencement of hostilities against any nation. To suppose that

* Nardini, Sul Quirinale.

this bauble is *that* Republican Column, is truly the height of absurdity. The material of which it is made was unknown till luxury brought her train of elegance and corruption, and twisted columns were unheard of till the decline of taste. The style of the Triumph represented upon it in bas relief proves it to be the work of a degenerate period. I should have conjectured it to have been of the low ages, and brought from the baths of Constantine, in the gardens; but better judges pronounced it to be the sculpture of the *Cinque Cento.*

I turned from this toy to the only painting in this suite of rooms that had power to interest me—Guido's Portrait of Beatrice Cenci. She was young, beautiful and noble—but a parricide. Yet, when you look upon her, it is scarcely possible to believe it. Did that sweet and expressive face, that gentle form, harbour a soul, that, with cool premeditation, could embrue her hands in the blood of her father? I know not how to give the crimes of that father a name. They were such as to make humanity shudder—such as a fiend incarnate might have rejoiced to have perpetrated. The brutal insults, the wanton cruelties, the diabolical sufferings, of which he made his innocent children the victims, were not the worst. He was a monster without shame, remorse or pity; and if he had had ten thousand lives, he well deserved to lose them—from any hand but hers. Yet it was his daughter, who, in the silent midnight, when even the iron hearts of the ruffians she had hired relented,—seized the avenging dagger from them

nerveless arm, and plunged it into the breast of a sleeping parent. But, how shall I find words to stigmatize that government which could afford no protection from tyranny the most atrocious, from sufferings the most cruel, from insults worse than death; and which drove this young and ill-fated being to murder, for the very security of her innocence! How shall I speak my horror at a government that condemned the whole of a young and innocent family, even the little children, to the torture, that the perpetrator of the murder might be discovered! And what heart does not melt with pity when they hear, that though she had herself borne the rack with unshrinking firmness, yet, when her little brother was seized by the executioner to be placed upon it, and his plaintive voice cried, "O save me! save me!" she burst forward, and screamed aloud, "I am the murderess!"

The utmost efforts of the unhappy girl were directed to save her mother, who was implicated in the guilt. She asked no mercy for herself—But all was in vain, and the mother and daughter perished together, by a public and ignominious execution.

I may be wrong, but the fate and misfortunes of this young and criminal being sunk deeper on my heart than the sufferings of many of pure and unsullied fame. For the deepest misery had driven her to the deepest guilt, and she passed on to death without the unutterable consolations of approving virtue.

There is a settled sorrow, a wildness, and a pro-

phetic melancholy in her eye, that is inexpressibly touching; and weak, though it be, I own that I have wept over the feeling, the speaking, the angelically lovely countenance of her who stabbed her father.

Above, in a suite of very little rooms, full very stupid little paintings, you will see a Magdalen by Guido, the speaking beauty and pathos of which I shall never forget. My feeble praise cannot do justice to its merits.

You will also find here, and dispersed over the palace, a multiplicity of imitations of Salvator Rosa, by that parrot of landscape painters, Andréa Locatelli. Farewell.

LETTER LXII.

PALAZZI BARBERINI AND SCIARRA.

THE present representative of the Barberini family, one of the most ancient, proud, wealthy, and powerful of the Italian nobility, now lives in one half of the attic storey of his own palace. The other half is occupied by the Prince of Peace, and the principal floor is inhabited by Charles VII., the late King of Spain, and his old Queen.*

Poverty, which drove the Prince Barberini to his garrets, has compelled him to dispose of that celebrated Museum of ancient sculpture, vases, gems, cameos, intaglios, medals, &c., which was so long the wonder and admiration of Europe. Whither it is now dispersed, no one can say. The Barberini, now the Portland Vase,† is, we all

* Both of whom are since dead.

† It was found in what is called the sarcophagus of Alexander Severus, now in the Museum of the Capitol, and which was discovered in a tomb on the Via Latina, the modern road to Frescati.

know, in the British Museum. The famous Sleeping Faun * is cased up in wood, ready to be sent off to Munich, and only waits to cross the Rhætian Alps, till the Ægina Marbles, which the Prince of Bavaria has also purchased, are ready to bear it company.

A noble ancient lion, in white marble, found in a tomb near Tivoli, adorns the staircase. I believe the sculptures, as well as the paintings of this palace, were divided with the Prince Sciarra, another branch of the family. Of the Barberini, half of the pictures, the finest have been sold, and those that remain are seen under all the disadvantages of bad lights, dirt, and utter neglect.

But some among them triumph over every disadvantage.

Nicolas Poussin's Death of Germanicus, is one of the finest of his learned and masterly compositions. Its colouring, never, perhaps, very good, has suffered much from time and injury; but its other merits atone for this great defect, and the more it is studied, the more it will be admired. The energy of spirit, struggling with the sinking

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* This Faun was found in the ditch of the Castle of Angelo, and is supposed to have been one of the statues which Belisarius is accused of having hurled down upon the besiegers.† But a Faun, reclining in sleep, [illegible] stronge ornament for the exterior of a mausoleum; [illegible] render it dubious, whether any other statue than that of Adrian himself, ever stood upon the Moles Hadriani.

† Procopius. De Bella Got

weakness of approaching dissolution, the heroic fortitude of the sufferer, and the grief of the inimitable groupe that surround his death-bed, are finely pourtrayed. Poussin has, indeed, transfused into this painting the true spirit of the ancients. He has not copied them, but he has composed and created as they would have done.

His Miracle of St Peter, who restores to life and strength a boy that had fallen from a window, and shattered its limbs dreadfully on the pavement, is extremely fine, and in much better preservation than the Death of Germanicus.

Raphael's Portrait of his Mistress, the Fornarina, is not in his best style. There is a hardness, a poorness, a constraint, in the manner; no freedom of pencilling, or glow of colouring. She wears an armlet, with the name of Raffaello Senzio d'Urbino, inscribed upon it.

There is a small Holy Family, by Raphael, so much injured that its beauty is nearly effaced. A fallen Corinthian capital, introduced into it, adds to its picturesque effect; and, perhaps, is intended typically to represent the overthrow of Paganism, by the birth of the infant Christ, at whose feet it lies.

Tintoretto's Christ is fine. The Pietà is designed by Buonarotti. It exactly resembles his groupe, in sculpture, of the Virgin and dead Christ, at the Cathedral of Florence.

Guido's Portrait of St Andréa Corsini,—the original of the Mosaic in the Corsini Chapel, at St

John's Lateran, is in his best style. Christ disputing with the Doctors, by Albert Durer, is excellent in its kind. I never yet saw any one whose risibility was proof against those Doctors.

Caravaggio's Martyrdom of St C[illegible], Guido's St Agatha; Andrea Sacchi's [illegible], Annano's Joseph and Potiphar's Wife; Parmigiano's Marriage of St Catherine, (much injured, and many more,—are fine paintings.

Those worthy personages, the old King and Queen of Spain, and the Prince of Peace, go out to take an airing diurnally, at the *venti due e mezzo*,* in two heavy coaches and six, with out-riders to clear the way, &c.

We understood that the paintings in the apartments of their ex-majesties, could not be seen without their own royal permission; but, as soon as this procession drove off to-day, we went to try, having no other passport or introduction, than a piastre. It is worthy of remark, that on our request of admittance, it was declared to be "impossible;" but, on the production of this talisman, a pretended leave was asked of some invisible person, and, lo! the doors were opened.

Of the paintings, or other curiosities, contained in these regal chambers, I can give you no account, (a loss I can suppose you capable of bearing with

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* Half-past twenty-two o'clock, or half-past two before sunset.

becoming fortitude;) but my companions of this morning could atone for my deficiency, for they saw the whole collection, before I had found out half the beauties of two splendid Morillos, and hurried me away, without staying themselves to give Obedience to the great hall, painted in fresco by Pietro da Cortona.

They carried me up the opposite staircase to the apartments of the Prince of Peace, whose paintings have a merit, rare here,—that of being clean, and in good preservation. They are worth seeing. There are many good copies, and a few originals.

The Garden of the Barberini Palace is pointed out as the site where the ancient Capitol of Numa Pompilius stood. I know of no creditable authority to support the opinion, that Numa,—that priestly king,—ever had a capitol, on the then uninhabited Quirinal Hill, for Plutarch seems to speak of a house only. The minute and accurate Livy would not have omitted mentioning it, had it existed, or been known to exist; and surely, in his day, he had more chance of discovering that such a thing had been than we have now.

PALAZZO SCIARRA.

The other division of the Barberini Paintings are at the Sciarra Palace, on the Corso; and as they are unimpaired both in number and value, they are one of the most select collections of any in Rome.

There is a Holy Family, by Andrea del Sarto, here, which I was told to admire extremely; but I never could carry my admiration for any of his works to any very extravagant height. Besides, there is one of his paintings in the Pitti Palace, far superior to this. Indeed, the best specimens of the painters of the Florentine School, are seldom to be met with out of Florence. This poor man's real name was Andréa Vanucchi, but he was called Andrea del Sarto, from his father's trade, and Andréa *senza errori*, from his own faultless works. They might have been more faultless, if he could have prolonged his studies in Rome; but it was his misfortune to be cursed with a wife, who embroiled him with all his friends, bereaved him of his pupils, drew him from the patronage of Francis I., and involved him in debt and dishonour. In his last sickness he was abandoned by the ungrateful woman, for whom he had sacrificed friends, fortune, fame, and integrity. He died at the age of forty-two, in the extremity of poverty, misery, and even of famine.

There is another Holy Family, by another great master of the Florentine School, which I admire far more. It is by Fra' Bartolomeo; the glow and freshness of colouring in this admirable painting, the softness of the skin, the beauty and sweetness of the expression, the look with which the mother's eyes are bent upon the baby she holds in her arms, and the innocent fondness with which the other child gazes up in her face,—are worthy of the painter whose works Raphael delighted to study,

and from which, in a great measure, he formed his principles of colouring.

The cloister has produced many great logicians, theologians, and politicians; many renowned diplomatists, intriguers, and prime ministers; indeed, more versed in the knowledge of this world, than could be expected from a spot sanctified to the purposes of another—but very few poets, painters, or men of genius. It did not produce, but rather buried one—in Fra' Bartolomeo della Porta; for he entered the cloister in consequence of a rash vow, and was persuaded, or obliged, from false scruples, to destroy all his studies and paintings in nudities. Lippo, and Sebastian del Piombo, and several other great painters, however, emerged from the cloister; but by far the greatest number of celebrated painters have sprung from the lower classes. Giotto was a shepherd; Andréa dell Mantegna, a cattle-driver; Gaspar Poussin, an errand-boy; Claude Lorraine, a pastry-cook; Marcello Venusti, a colour-grinder; Tintoretto, as his name implies, the son of a dyer; Caravaggio, a plaisterer; and Salvator Rosa, a lazaroni in the streets of Naples.

Leonardo da Vinci and Buonarotti were both of noble birth, and both Florentines.* Leonardo so far surpassed all his predecessors and contemporaries, that he seemed to be the only painter in the world, till his fame was eclipsed by Buonarotti,

* Leonardo was born in the village of Vinci on the Arno, near Florence.

who was twenty-two years his junior. Perhaps Buonarotti's contempt for colouring was, in some measure, derived from Leonardo's superiority in it. He chose to undervalue that in which he did not excel.

In their rival cartoons of the Battle of Pisa, as decided was the superiority of Michael Angelo's in design and composition, that the preference was unanimously given to it. But both these great works were spoken of as prodigies of art, and formed the study of succeeding artists, till they were unfortunately, or rather maliciously, destroyed.

It is unfortunate for the fame of Leonardo, that both his greatest works have perished. This cartoon disappeared early, and his Last Supper, in the deserted refectory of the Dominican Convent at Milan, is scarcely the shadow of a shade; indeed, it has been so often retouched and restored, that no trace of the original painting is now supposed to remain.

Considering these disasters, and the extreme slowness with which he painted, for it is recorded, that he was employed four years on the portrait of Gioconda alone;† it is, I think, wonderful, that so many of his works still exist, for he was not only a painter, a sculptor, an architect, and an engineer, but one of the most accomplished men of his age.

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* Lanzi. Storia Pittorica.

† That it might be four years before it was finished I can believe; but that he was employed four years solely upon painting one portrait, is not credible, nor consistent with the activity of his mind and his unwearied application.

In poetry, music, dancing, fencing, and riding, he was unrivalled. He invented a new lyrical instrument, formed chiefly of silver, and excelled as an improvisatore. He was the delight and ornament of society, in the court of the Duke Sforza at Milan; nor was his time entirely devoted to the fine arts. His predilection for science, and his studious habits, are proved by the voluminous manuscripts still extant in his hand-writing, in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.*

His residence at Rome was short. The ill-judged and illiberal sarcasms of Leo X. disgusted him, and the friendship of Francis I. drew him to the French capital, where, during a lingering and hopeless illness, he was cheered by the unremitting kindness, and is even said to have expired in the arms, of that amiable and noble-minded monarch.

The portrait of Leonardo, in the Florentine Gallery, by his own hand, is one of the finest heads, and the most exquisite painting, I have ever seen. One of his best works is in this palace—Modesty and Vanity, which is, I think, inferior only to his Herod's Daughter, in the Tribune at Florence.

Here is a masterpiece of Caravaggio's; a sharper playing at cards with a youth of family and fortune, whom his confederate, while pretending to be looking on, is assisting to cheat. The subject will remind you of the Flemish School; but this

* Nine volumes of these manuscripts have been retained in Paris, whither the whole work was transported at the time the French plundered Italy.

painting bears no resemblance to it. Here is no farce—no caricature. It is true to Nature, and the expression, though admirably given, is not in the least overcharged. Character was never more strongly marked, nor a tale more inimitably told. It is life itself, and you almost forget it is a picture, and expect to see the game go on. The colouring is beyond all praise.

Raphael's Portrait of a Musician, a friend of his own, is beautiful.

There are two Magdalens, by Guido, almost duplicates, and yet one is incomparably superior to the other. She is reclining on a rock, and her tearful and uplifted eyes, the whole of her countenance and attitude, speak the overwhelming sorrow that penetrates her soul. Her face might charm the heart of a stoic; and the contrast of her youth and enchanting loveliness, with the abandonment of grief, the resignation of all earthly hope, and the entire devotion of herself to penitence and to heaven, is so affecting, that it has drawn tears from many an eye.

There are some fine Saints by Guercino—an exquisite painting by Giorgione, and many more that ought to be seen, and must be admired—but they cannot be described; for palaces appear before me in long array, and before we have got through them, I shall have exhausted both your patience and my own.

LETTER LXIII.

THE PALAZZI MASSIMI AND SPADA — POMPEY'S STATUE—PALAZZO COSTAGUTI—PALAZZO MATTEI.

THE Palazzo Massimi, though one of the smallest and worst situated of the Roman Palaces, is, I think, by far, the prettiest building of them all. The simplicity of its Doric portico and court particularly pleased me, and does great credit to the taste of Baldazzar Peruzzi, who was its architect. In these days every painter was an architect, yet I cannot think the two arts well adapted to be united in the same profession.

We visited this palace to see the famous Discobolus, found in the grounds of the Villa Palombari, on the Æsquiline Hill, which is the finest in the world—at least, above ground.

We were shewn a chapel, formerly a bed-room, in which that notable Saint, Filipo Neri, raised from the dead a son of this noble house, on the 16th of March, 1583, in consequence of which grand miracle S. Filipo Neri was canonized, the

place was consecrated, and a solemn service is still annually performed in it upon the anniversary of the day.

We Protestants, being, in the opinion of the Catholics, of the number of those "who would not believe, though one came from the dead to tell us it were so," went away in the persuasion that the Humane Society worked such miracles every day, though nobody made saints of them in consequence.

In the stables of the neighbouring Palazzo Pio, it is said some of the remains of the walls of Pompey's Theatre may be seen. I did not go to look for them.

PALAZZO SPADA.

We afterwards visited the Palazzo Spada, to see the celebrated Statue of Pompey, at the foot of which Cæsar fell. Every one knows that it was found below the foundation-wall of two houses, in a lane near the site of the Curia of Pompey—that the proprietors, unable to settle to which of them it belonged, the head being under one house and the feet under the other, imitated the judgment of Solomon, and resolved to cut it in two—and that, a cunning Cardinal hearing of this, persuaded the Pope to buy it, and to make him a present of it.

The statue is larger than life, and in the heroic style—that is, with no other drapery than the

chlamys,* which covers one shoulder. The style is certainly not of first-rate excellence, but this statue has an interest beyond all that statuary can give; and we gazed upon it till the long past scene seemed again realized—till Cæsar, defending himself against the conspirators, saw at length, [illegible]ger of his most trusted friend; and, willing to leave a world in which faith and friendship were empty names, exclaimed,—"Et tu Brute!" as he folded his head in his robe, and sank in death.

But there is no recollection or belief that the fancy loves to cling to, that these vile antiquarians do not come with their "doubts," to disturb the pleasurable thought. They "doubt whether this be the Statue of Pompey—Possibly an Emperor, because he carries the globe in his hand!"—An Emperor!—But what Emperor?—They are all, except the last dregs of the emperors, pretty well known. They took care to multiply their persons, and what with statues, busts, medals, and coins, one sees them so continually, that there is no mistaking their physiognomy. I feel as intimately acquainted with the twelve Cæsars as if I had known them all my life; and the countenance of the mild and martial Marcus Aurelius, and his coxcombical colleague, the whiskered Lucius Verus—the plain

* A short Grecian mantle, generally used in sculpture for the statues of Heroes and Gods, who otherwise are nude.

face of Hadrian, and that dark ruffian, Caracalla's unbending frown, are as familiar to me as my own.

The Statue of Pompey bears no resemblance to any known Emperor. From the style of sculpture, it cannot represent any of the latter ones—it answers to the state of the arts at the close of the Republic;—it was found on the spot where the Statue of Pompey stood;—it bears a strong resemblance to the head on his medal, (published in the Museo Romano;) and as to the objection of his bearing the globe,—was there any thing extraordinary in the adulation of marking the extent of his conquests, by putting that symbol into the hand of a victorious general, whose triumphs had extended over the whole of the then known world, through Europe, Africa, and Asia; and who, till his glory was eclipsed by the brighter star of Cæsar, was the idol of the Roman people, and virtually the master of the world? No!—the conviction is irresistible; and in spite of all the antiquaries, I *will* believe it to be the Statue of Pompey—that very individual statue, at the foot of which "great Cæsar fell."

Eustace says, that the arm of the statue was sawn off by the French, in order that they might transport it with more facility to the Coliseum, where they acted before it Voltaire's foolish tragedy of the Death of Brutus. This may be, but the arm is known to be a modern restoration; and therefore, as the French only cut off what had before been put on, they did no great harm. Had the arm been ancient, the question as to the ide-

tity of the statue would have been decided at once, for, if that of an emperor, it would have borne the sceptre.

There are several pieces of ancient statuary here—The little God of Slumber reposes in the sweet sleep of infant innocence,—his poppies lying in his ungrasped hand.

But the finest, by far, is the Statue of an old Philosopher, sitting in a chair; supposed to be intended for Antisthenes listening to Socrates—an admirable piece of Grecian sculpture.

There are two fine antique bas reliefs, which were brought from the staircase of the Church of St Agnese, *fuore le murà*, representing Perseus liberating Andromeda, and Endymion sleeping. They are duplicates of those in the Museum of the Capitol.

There cannot be imagined a more deserted, dreary, decayed, and deplorably dirty place, than this poverty-struck palace.

Above stairs, there is a collection of pictures, some of which are, or rather have been, good; for they are cracked, spoiled, defaced, and destroyed with damp and darkness, dirt and neglect.

There is a little practical perspective in the court, formed by a diminishing colonnade, which gives the effect of great length, though really very short. It was made by Borromini, whose genius I could wish had been confined to such nice little works as these.

PALAZZO COSTAGUTI.

The Palazzo Costaguti is a most dismal, dirty, miserable place. Words cannot give you an idea of its utter wretchedness, and I could scarcely believe these forlorn, filthy chambers, were the residence of the Marchesa, I had seen blazing in diamonds at the * * * * * ambassador's ball, the night before. We visited it to see the ceilings, painted in fresco, with which it was adorned in its earlier and more prosperous days.

The first is by Albano. It represents the Centaur carrying off Dejanira, and Hercules slaying him with the arrow. What it may have been, it would now be unfair to judge, for the colouring is faded, and very little of the grace and beauty of Albano remain.

The ceiling of the second room has fallen in;—the destroyed fresco was Polyphemus and Galathea, by Lanfranco. I cannot be sorry that the works of a man, whose envious malignity pursued the amiable Domenichino through life, literally persecuted him to death, and even prompted him to deface the matchless frescos that he could not equal,—should, by a sort of poetical justice, be in turn destroyed.

In the third chamber Apollo appears in his car, drawn by four horses,—white, red, grey, and black,—I suppose to represent the different times of the day—but such horses!—they may be like

heavenly steeds, but I am quite sure they bear no resemblance to earthly ones. In a corner of the room is Old Time, seizing hold of a frightened woman, called Truth. I gazed with astonishment and disappointment on this ceiling, for they say it is by Domenichino; but I can only say, I hope not—and that, I am sure, if Domenichino did paint it, he never painted any thing else so bad. Amongst the immense variety of frescos with which he has adorned Rome, this is the only one unworthy of his genius.

Rinaldo and Armida, borne through the air in the car of the Enchantress, drawn by dragons, is by far the finest fresco in this palace. It is by Guercino, and designed with all his force and energy, heightened by all the splendour of his chiaro oscuro. The figure of Rinaldo is very fine; but Armida is not what the poet's fancy would have painted.

Justice and Peace, by Lanfranco, as well as the extreme darkness of the room would allow us to judge, is a very fine painting; but, perhaps, the uncertain light gave it an imaginary beauty, as I have sometimes seen an ordinary woman look almost divinely lovely in the soft beam of fading twilight, or shaded moonlight; and witnessed, for the first time, scenes at that magic hour, which seemed beyond description beautiful, but which, when viewed in the garish eye of day, were stripped of every charm.

Next—I saw

> "Arion—on a dolphin's back,
> Uttering such pleasing and harmonious breath,

That the rude sea grew civil at his song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the *minstrel's* music."

Poetry apart, however, Arion on the Dolphin's back, is a beautiful painting, by Romanelli. Upon another ceiling, are some gods and goddesses, and peacocks, by the Cavaliere d'Arpino; and plenty of bad paintings, with high sounding titles, on the walls.

PALAZZO MATTEI.

We have been several times at the Palazzo Mattei, if possible, a still more deplorable place, than the Palazzo Costaguti, in order to see Rachael and Jacob, a fresco by Domenichino, which, by a kind of fatality, we have never yet seen. Our attempts have been all fruitless; either we thundered for half an hour at the door, and got no answer, or, if we obtained admittance, the Cardinal Mattei was in bed, or at dinner; or else he had gone out with the key in his pocket, even when a time had been fixed; so that we have given it up in despair. By means of our frequent visitations, we saw some very fine ancient bas reliefs, in the court and on the staircase, and one fine painting in the house—a Holy Family, painted by Parmagianino, with all that grace and captivating sweetness, to which he always aspired; and without any of that unfortunate affectation which too often marred his works. Yet, the best of them prove that he was a mannerist, and a close, though a successful

imitator of Corregio. But an imitator, in any of the fine arts, can never be great; or, rather, a truly great genius will never be an imitator;—for the very art of imitation is a confession of inferiority. Still, so beautiful are many of his paintings, that we cannot but regret that this infatuated man should have wasted his time, his talents, his fortune, and his life, upon the wild and visionary pursuit of alchemy, in which he blasted all his hopes, and sacrificed even his integrity.

LETTER LXIV.

PASQUIN—PALAZZO BRASCHI—PALAZZO GUISTINIONI—PANTHEON BY MOONLIGHT—PALAZZO BORGHESE.

THE mutilated statue of Pasquin stands at the corner of the Palazzo Braschi, where he has cut his caustic jokes for many an age, and levelled, with impunity, his sarcasms against priests and princes, popes and cardinals, church and state.

The Statue of Marforio, in the court of the Museum of the Capitol, was his ancient respondent, but their witty dialogues and smart repartees, are now at an end.

There is another mutilated figure in a street in Rome, which is known by the name of Madam Lucretia, but, unlike the loquacity of her sex, she has always maintained a strict silence.

Pasquinades, however, are still occasionally current in Rome, though, perhaps, no longer affixed upon Pasquin. Amongst many smart epigrams, and squibs of satire, some of which would not be intelligible out of Rome, the following seems to me one of the best, and it has, at least, as much truth as point to recommend it.

"Hic venditur Christus, venduntur dogmata Patri,
Descendam infernum ne quoque vendar Ego?"

Pasquin did not spare the French during their stay here. Among the many squibs against them, he said,

"I Francesi son' tutti ladri.'—
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"Non tutti—ma Buonaparte,"

was the anticipated reply.

On a tremendous storm, which took place after the decrees of Buonaparte were put in force at Rome, the following somewhat profane pasquinade appeared:—

"L'Altissimo in sù, ci manda la tempesta,
L'Altissimo qua giù, ci toglia qualche resta,
E fra le Duc Altissimi,
Stiamo noi Malissimi." *

Canova finished the figure of Italy, for the tomb of Alfieri, about the time the French overran the country. Soon afterwards the following appeared:—

"Questa volta Canova C'ha sbagliato,
Ha l'Italia vestito, ed é spogliata.'

One of the best things of the kind, I think, was made on the colonnade, in front of Carlton House, by an Italian, a man of some taste, who, being accustomed to see columns supporting something, or of

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* On the late visit of the Emperor Francis to Rome, a pasquinade has appeared, free from this fault.

"Gaudiam Urbis. Fletus Provinciarum. Risu Mundi."

some use, stood amazed at the sight of this sinecure row, and questioned them as to their employment, thus:

—— " Care Colonne! che fate quà?"
- - - - - - - -
" Non sappiamo in verità.'

was their innocent reply.

But to return to the Palazzo Braschi. As you ascend the staircase, you will be struck with its noble architecture, which is in the most chaste and classical taste. The stairs are led up through a colonnade, formed of columns of red Oriental granite, the high polish of which accords well with the lustre of the variegated marbles, of which the stairs and ballustrades are composed, and with the graceful symmetry and just design of the whole. The coup d'œil, as we mounted it the other night, when brilliantly lighted up for a grand fête, was more striking than any thing of the kind I ever saw.

In the unfinished gallery of the Palace, stands the beautiful Colossal Statue of Antinous, which was dug up on the site of the ancient Gabii, by the late Gavin Hamilton. Its colossal size was probably the cause why it was not removed to Paris; for the late conquerors of Italy, after confiscating the property of this noble family, in revenge for the active opposition they had made to their entering Rome, would surely have had no scruples of conscience in appropriating this statue, if they could have carried it off—especially as they seized every other piece of sculpture belonging to them, that was worth taking.

I do not recollect any thing more in this gallery worth notice; but my eyes were so entirely engrossed by the matchless beauty of Antinous, that I could look at nothing else; and scarcely, as I gazed upon it, could I wonder that Hadrian believed that form to be inhabited by a god.

This admirable piece of sculpture is secluded from the public eye, by the present inhabitant of this palace—the Austrian minister. As we were acquainted with him and his amiable family, we had no difficulty in seeing it; but I cannot admire this system of exclusion.

PALAZZO GIUSTINIANI.

The ancient and wealthy Giustiniani family are now beggars, and their palace is inhabited by strangers. All its fine paintings are gone. We enquired, in vain, for Poussin's Massacre of the Innocents, Domenichino's St John the Evangelist, Annibale Carrachi's Christ and the Cananean, or Caravaggio's Incredulity of St Thomas. It would be easier to make a list of what this palace has lost, than what it possesses. There is not a single good painting left. We were shewn a great number of frightful daubs, each of which was dignified with the name of some great artist. I once asked the man if he was certain, one, he called a Domenichino, was an original,—to which he replied, "*Originalissimo*, Signora!"

This superlatively original painting was so su-

perlatively bad, that it was well the spirit of Domenichino, who, during his life, was accustomed to every insult, could not know this greater opprobrium cast upon him after his death.

This Palace is built upon the ruins of Nero's Baths, and a prodigious quantity of statuary, of all kinds, was found in them, which once adorned its magnificent galleries and spacious halls; but the finest of the statues, like the pictures, have disappeared.

An immense number are still standing, in utter confusion, in a set of miserable, unfurnished, dusty, and desolate apartments; and though the most part of the busts and statues are mutilated, and all of them are discoloured and abominably dirty, there are many among them of very fine sculpture. Amongst these I will only mention the Statue of Marcellus, in the hall, and a youthful male figure, the Torso of which is very fine; but it is badly restored, which, indeed, is the case with many of them.

The Etruscan Vestal is not allowed to be Etruscan, and seldom acknowledged to be a Vestal; but she is unquestionably very ancient—too ancient to be perfect. There is an admirable goat close beside her, which I liked much better; and there is the statue of the little Harpocrates, holding up his finger and looking wise—a god I always admire, though I cannot be reckoned among his disciples. Pray, can you tell me why the ancients gave the God of Silence a cornucopia?

The best view of the Pantheon is from the windows of this palace. I saw it by moonlight, when the softened light gleamed beautifully in silver lines upon the tall columns of the portico, more distinctly marked by the dark shade of the intercolumniations, while the serenity of the sky, and the stillness that reigned over every thing, made its beauty more deeply felt.

You will wonder what took me to the Giustiniani Palace at night, but we happened to be dining with Count Funchal, the Portuguese ambassador, who lives there; and, as it was moonlight, I took the opportunity of looking out at the Pantheon; ever since which time, his Excellency has entertained a rooted conviction that I am slightly deranged; and never sees me without asking, if, when the moon is at the full, I will not return to his house to see the Pantheon. "Well, that is what I don't understand," said an Italian Principessa, when he told her of this extraordinary fancy of mine—"for, certainly, one can see plainer in the day-time than the night."*

PALAZZO BORGHESE.

The Palazzo Borghese, one of the largest and handsomest palaces in Rome, is now inhabited only by Paolina, the sister of Buonaparte, and the wife

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* Non lo capisco—di certo, si può vedere più chiaro da giorno che da notte.

of the Prince Borghese, who himself lives constantly at Florence. This building, which would seem large enough to contain some hundreds of people, is, apparently, too small for a single lady; for there is another "*Il Palazzo della Famiglia Borghese,*" to which my unlucky stars once conducted me; and its filth and foul odours have left an uneffaceable impression upon my remembrance. The *famiglia,* in modern as in ancient Roman days, means the servants; and not the domestic servants only, but the trades-people, all of whom are included in this comprehensive term; and this horrible hole, of which I have been speaking, is inhabited by the artisans who are, as well as by many who are not, employed in the service of the Borghese.

When a Roman Prince has, or *had,* a grand entertainment, for such a thing rarely occurs now, all the tailors, shoemakers, joiners, carpenters, upholsterers, smiths, and bell-hangers, whom he employed, were dressed out in state liveries, kept for this purpose from generation to generation; and, for the time being, were turned into footmen. Therefore, it was no uncommon thing, on the day of a fete, to see half a hundred livery servants, but if you returned when it was over, you would not find half a dozen.

It is a literal fact, that, happening to return to the palace of a Roman nobleman rather early on the morning after a ball, in order to enquire after a diamond cross I had lost, I found, in the great hall, piles of livery coats, and the Principessa herself telling them over.

It was not, however, the Principessa Borghese, who is a very different personage.

Some years ago, Canova sculptured a Statue of this lady, as Venus, and it is esteemed by himself one of the very best of his works. No one else can have an opportunity of judging of it, for the Prince, who certainly is not jealous of his wife's person, is so jealous of her statue, that he keeps it locked up in a room of the Borghese Palace at Rome, of which he keeps the key, and not a human being, not even Canova himself, can get access to it.

The fine Museum of Sculpture, which the Prince gave Buonaparte, in exchange for the bubble of the Vice-royalty of Turin, is irreparably gone; but the principal part of the paintings are now restored, and form by far the best collection of any in Rome. They appear to every disadvantage, for they are arranged in a suite of very ill lighted apartments on the ground-floor; the only ground-floor I ever remember to have seen inhabited in Rome.

The Domenichinos, the Titians, and the Albanos, are certainly the finest in Rome. Domenichino's Sybil, and his Sports of Diana and her Nymphs, are works that no praise of mine can do justice to. I have returned to them again and again with undiminished delight, and found them "as new," and quite as beautiful, "the twentieth time as the first."

Titian's Graces are very fat—not very young,—and dressed in very old-fashioned gowns; but they are exquisitely painted. They are employed

in binding Cupid. But, out of Venice, I have seen nothing of Titian's to compare to his Sacred and Prophane Love, which is here. It represents two figures,—one, a heavenly and youthful form, unclothed, except with a light drapery—the other, a lovely female, dressed in the most splendid attire; both are sitting on the brink of a well, into which a little winged Love is groping, apparently to find his lost dart.

Description can give you no idea of the consummate beauty of this beautiful composition. It has all Titian's matchless warmth of colouring,—with a correctness of design no other painter of the Venetian School ever attained. It is nature—but not individual nature;—it is ideal beauty in all its perfection, and breathing life in all its truth, that we behold. And, if the character of Profane Love has too much in it of Sacred, such is the charm of the expression, that what we criticise as a fault, we yet admire as a beauty. For his powerful genius has not only called down Divine Love from heaven, but given to Earthly Love that character of sentiment and feeling that allies it to divinity.

There are several other Titians, and some very fine ones. His Prodigal Son is a splendid painting. The Woman kneeling in Supplication, before Christ, wants the greatness of manner his better works display.

Here are Venuses in abundance; but the true painter of Venus, in my opinion, was Albani. It was he who invested her with those captivating graces and charms, that seem to spring from the

magic cestus, and proclaim her the Queen of Love. It may be a fault, the continual repetition of the same face in all his paintings, however lovely and engaging; but when we remember that it was the countenance of his wife he loved to draw, we willingly pardon it.

He has represented Venus in four different pictures; 1st, borne on her triumphant car, and surrounded by her laughing Loves; 2dly, equipping herself at her toilette; 3dly, busy at Vulcan's furnace, forging arrows for Cupid; and lastly, gazing enamoured upon Adonis, which is the masterpiece of the whole.

David with Goliah's Head, is a masterly work of Caravaggio's. It has all his strong lights and nervous energy; but it wants, what he always wanted, elevation; though the ghastly expression of the head, the livid lips, and the deadly paleness of David himself, give it all the horrible effect he could have desired.

St Anthony Preaching to the Fishes, by Paul Veronese, is one of the oddest paintings I ever saw. The Saint is on a rock, and his figure, especially his right leg, is much admired by the cognoscenti. The groupes that surround him, in various listening attitudes, are admirable; but they occupy only one small corner of the picture; the rest is one waste of bright dauby green—sea and sky, clouds and ether, all the same shade of grass-green. I concluded that the blues had turned green, never conceiving that any body would think of painting a green sky; but was assured by a

connoisseur that it was quite correct, and done on purpose—that the painting would otherwise have been worth nothing, and that it was extremely fine. If so, it is certainly the most simple receipt for fine painting I ever heard of.

Parmigianino's St Catherine, his favourite subject, has great grace and sweetness in the face, great elegance and flow of outline, and none of his usual affectation.

I cannot give the same praise to Leda, by Leonardo da Vinci, which is distorted, even to frightfulness, with excess of affectation.

Elizabeth Sirani's painting on touch-stone, of Judith in the act of prayer, before she murders the sleeping Holofernes, is by far the best of her productions I have ever seen. A mere imitator can never be great, and she was certainly a mere imitator of Guido; but in this little work she seems to have felt the true spirit of her master.

A Landscape, by Annibale Caracci, is a beautiful composition, and the Head of St Francis is extremely fine. Cigoli's St Francis, a full length, is an excellent painting. The divine expression of the uplifted eyes, and the hands clasped in transport; the force of the design, and the glow of colouring, are admirably thrown out by the cold dark back ground.

Christ tied to the Column, designed by Michael Angelo Buonaroti, and painted by Sebastian del Piombo, is a very grand work. The Saviour is not too much humanized; even in the lowest state of ignominy and degradation, he is undebased. The

Divinity speaks in each gesture and lineament; and while we execrate the impious hand that could lift the scourge against that suffering Spirit, we shudder to think such wretches were of the same nature with ourselves.

Raphael's Deposition from the Cross, is said to be one of his earliest paintings; but it is not in the stiff stretched-out style of Pietro Perugino; and though it was unquestionably done before he had staid long enough at Florence to have studied the works of the Florentine School,* it is, even in design, a masterly performance. The body is bearing to the Sepulchre, and the bearers, and the whole groupe that surround it, with all their varying expressions and passions, are extremely fine. We behold grief under every varying form. St Peter, old, sober and sorrowful; his grey hairs, and silent, composed, yet deep-seated affliction finely contrasting with the passionate sorrow of Mary Magdalen, at his side; but the Virgin, and the unutterable heart-breaking agony of spirit, expressed in her fainting form, touches the heart the most powerfully. It was a beautiful thought, for painting could never have expressed overwhelming grief such as hers, but by insensibility. The distinction between her figure and that of the dead Christ, is finely and strongly marked. Though both are pale and lifeless, in her you see it is the suspension of life, in him a total extinction; that she will revive to all the bitterness of affliction; but

* Lanzi. Storia Pittorica.

that the soul which animated his divine form is fled forever !

The coldness, the rigidity, the insensibility of death, are strikingly pourtrayed ; but those touching features, and that pallid corpse, while they tell of mortal sorrows and sufferings, still bear the hope and the sublimity that are triumphant over the grave ; and we gaze upon them till we almost exclaim,—" How beautiful is death !"

This catalogue of paintings,—unconscionable as you may think it—does not comprize one half of those worth notice in this collection, which contains the greatest number of fine ones, and the fewest bad, of any in Rome.

LETTER LXV.

PALAZZO LUCIANO.

LUCIEN BUONAPARTE, the Prince of Canino, has purchased a large palace in the Via de' Condotti, for his winter residence. A very small part of it is inhabited by himself; the rest is let to a variety of lodgers. This seems somewhat extraordinary, since he is said to be immensely rich.

I cannot applaud his liberality in refusing all strangers, excepting those personally acquainted with him, permission to view the admirable paintings his fine taste has collected. We, indeed, were not sufferers by this illiberal, and I fear, English system; being among the privileged few; but the more we admired them, the more we regretted the general exclusion of our countrymen from the Pallazzo Luciano.

This collection is small, but entirely composed of masterpieces, and kept in beautiful preservation; a very unusual circumstance in Rome. Many of the famous pictures of the Giustiniani Gallery have found their way here.

The Massacre of the Innocents, a most masterly, but horror-striking painting, by Nicholas Poussin, makes us shudder while we gaze, yet rivets us before it. It is a complete tragedy. The agony of the mother is given, even to the extremity of nature itself, and her screams seem to rend the very heart.

Christ before Pilate, the masterpiece of Gherardo delle Notti, is extremely fine; and he must be wedded to system indeed, who would refuse his admiration to such a work, because, forsooth, "he does not approve of candle-lights." No lights will enlighten such critics as these—critics who think and feel by rule, and never know what it is to yield to the spontaneous judgment of nature and truth.

But, among all the various and inviting attractions of this collection, the masterpieces of the Carracci drew my unsatiated admiration Nor can I find words to speak my praise of "Christ giving Sight to the Blind," by Ludovico Caracci; "Christ and Mary Magdalen," by Annibal Caracci; or "Raising the Widow's Child from the Dead," by Agostino Caracci. I may be wrong, but to me these works of these three great masters, surpass even the celebrated ones at Bologna. They are, indeed, works of such surpassing perfection that I may not trust myself to speak my sense of their beauty, for I feel that I could not restrain myself; and that, like Dr Johnson, I can better practise abstinence than temperance. For the same reason I forbear to describe (nor could I) the exqui-

sitely beautiful Holy Family of Raphael; (*La Madonna de' Candelabri;*) Christ and the Woman of Samaria, by Giulio Romano; Titian's Diana surprised by Acteon; Domenichino's Saint John, and other Saints, adoring the Virgin; Guido's St Cecilia; Christ expiring on the Cross, designed by Michael Angelo Buonarotti; and many other first-rate paintings. Here are some noble portraits. A Duc d'Urbino, by Raphael; Rubens, by Vandyke; one of Rubens' Wives, by himself; Francis I., by Holbein; and several others.

Our artists complain, that portrait-painting cramps their genius, and ruins their fame. But these are portraits that, of themselves, would confer immortality on the hand that painted them. Never, then, let it be said, that this branch of the art affords no field for eminence. If Raphael, and Titian, and Giorgione, and Rubens, and Rembrandt, and Vandyke, and Velasquez, had never painted any thing else, their works would have been invaluable and their names imperishable.

Here is an admirable painting by Van Molle, Diogenes looking for an Honest Man; and Modesty and Vanity, by Leonardo da Vinci, a duplicate, perhaps the original of that in the Sciarra Palace. To me both seem of equal excellence—but this is only rehearsing a list of names—names that call up to me all the unspeakable beauty of the originals; but which to you, must be a dull, dry, unmeaning catalogue.

PALAZZO FALCONIERI—CARDINAL FESCH.

THE Palazzo Falconieri is now occupied by Cardinal Fesch, the uncle of Buonaparte, who was the Bishop of Lyons, and would one day have been Pope, if his nephew had remained Emperor. He is a fine-looking, robust, fresh-coloured man, apparently between fifty and sixty. He received us himself, conducted us through all the carpetted rooms, and shewed us every painting—apologised for being unable to attend us into the other apartments, as he was indisposed with a bad cold—politely insisted upon our sitting with him some time, and pressed us to return.

His apartments are clean, light, and cheerful, filled with handsome and commodious furniture, and so comfortable, that they are almost the only desirable rooms I have seen in any of the Palaces of Rome. The bust of his ex-imperial nephew, Napoleon le Grand, stands in one of them, crowned with laurel.

The paintings are in high preservation, and judiciously arranged. There is a large collection of the Flemish, French, and Italian Schools.

The Flemish, though far superior to any other that Rome contains, are inferior in value to many we possess in England; but they are extremely numerous. The Rembrandts are poor. I saw only one little painting, by Gerard Douw, an Old Man, with Spectacles, reading. There are two

pretty Cuyps; and several tolerably good paintings, by Ruysdale, Hobbima, Teniers, Wouverman, Vandervelt, and the principal painters of the Flemish School; but I remember nothing of first-rate excellence, except it be the Wise Men's Offering, by Rubens; which is by far the best of his works I have seen on this side the Alps. There is a Magdalen, by Vandyke; but I could not keep pace with Cardinal Fesch's admiration of it, nor durst I tell him how much finer is the Magdalen, by Vandyke, in Dulwich Gallery.

There are some of Gherardo delle Notti's flaming candlelights, excellent in their kind. I cannot see why this painter should be classed in the Flemish School, for he was only Flemish in birth; he studied at Rome, and all his works proclaim that he was the disciple of Caravaggio.

I thought Cardinal Fesch was rather severe upon the English. "You don't follow the example of your countrymen," he said to us. "They ask the name of the painter and the subject, and they noté them down; they make complete catalogues of all my paintings, and then they go away. But they never make any observations upon them." I made no catalogue, and shall (if possible) make very few observations. I cannot think it worth while to persecute you with an account of paintings, which, when seen, did not impress themselves upon my memory; and of those which did, I shall only mention the most remarkable.

There are four paintings from Scripture, by Al-

bani; and though, in general, I think he succeeds the best in fable, it is not possible to look on these, especially on the Angel and the Three Mary's at the Well, without the highest admiration.

Jephtha meeting his daughter, is a beautiful composition, with clear harmonious colouring, by Francisco da Mola, who was Albani's pupil, without resembling him. This painter almost seemed to unite, in his happiest efforts,—and this deserves to be reckoned among them,—the excellencies of the different Italian schools. The correct design of the Florentine, the warm colouring of the Venetian, the purity of composition of the Bolognese, and the power of expression and grandeur of style of the Roman. He certainly never equalled the greatest masters in any, but I think his merits have scarcely received their due portion of popular applause.

The Ascension, by Guido, is one of the most splendid of his works. The grandeur of thought, the glowing colouring, and the divine expression of the Virgin's face—radiant like that of a celestial being, or beatified spirit,—have "less of earth in them than heaven." The whole seems one blaze of glory.

This is a proof that Guido knew how to suit his colouring to his subject. The rosy hues of infancy, in his sleeping children, and the dazzling brightness of his Ascensions, are not less adapted to their peculiar expressions, than these pale silvery tones, that give such pathos to the countenances of his suffering martyrs, his supplicating Magdalens, or

his sainted Madonnas. What I have heard called the faults of Guido's colouring, I have often felt are beauties. They accord so touchingly with the expression, that the want of glow and life is more than compensated by their sweetness and perfect harmony.

There is an imitation, and not a bad one, here, of Guido, by Philippe de Champagne. But in subjects where passion, feeling, tenderness, and sentiment should be expressed—who can call forth that deep-seated, fervent expression, that wakes every chord of feeling,—or who possesses Guido's power over the heart?

There is a large painting of the Four Doctors of the Church, by Titian, in his first manner, as they say; and, indeed, in a manner unlike any thing of his I ever saw before, or desire to see again. It is prodigiously admired by the Cardinal and the connoisseurs. It seemed to me dry, hard, heavy, and inanimate, wholly destitute of expression, and of Titian's usual life. I never should have suspected him of painting any thing so dull.

There is a charming painting, however, which is life itself, or something more than life, by Giorgione; of himself and his wife.

Giocanda, by Leonardo da Vinci, cannot surely be that Giocanda upon which he spent four years of labour. It is not probable the original should have fallen into Cardinal Fesch's hands; nor can I believe this stiff, purple-coloured, ivory-looking piece of affectation, to be his celebrated Giocanda. It is, I should hope, a copy.

A small painting of St Sebastian, by Carlo Dolce, is, I think, a copy, perhaps by his daughter Agnes, from a fine painting of his I remember seeing in the Corsini Palace at Florence. Viewed at a little distance, however, it has that power of expression, which is the charm of Carlo Dolce's painting. That he had not acquired much of the Florentine correctness of design, the distorted arm and shoulder of this very saint is one proof. I remember the same deformity in the original. Never was any thing worse drawn.

But Carlo Dolce knew his own weakness, he only did single figures, and these very rarely at full length. He knew nothing of composition. The only attempt at it I ever remember to have seen, is in his Martyrdom of San Andréa, in a palace* at Florence. The figure of the saint is wonderfully fine, and every separate figure is fine—but every figure *is* separate; they have nothing to do with each other; there is no grouping—and no keeping; the lights fall scattered upon every part; and beautiful as parts of it are in detail, a worse composed picture can hardly be imagined. But single heads were his forte; and the finest of his works are certainly to be seen at Florence. His Magdalen and St Cecilia, in the gallery, and his Poetry, in the Corsini Palace, are sufficient to render him immortal.

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* The Palazzo Girini.

He painted with extreme slowness, and it is related, that he actually lost his senses from vexation, at seeing Luca Giordano, or Luca *fa presto*, as he was called, do more in six hours than he could have done in as many months.

But the high finish of his pictures is one of their chief beauties, and that is unattainable without much time and labour.

The painting that I admired the most in this collection, was the Salutation of Elizabeth, originally painted in fresco, on the wall of the church of Santa Maria della Pace, (in which are the Sybils of Raphael,) and taken off on canvas,—that hazardous operation,—in which the French destroyed the masterpiece of Daniel de Volterra.* It is now divided into three parts. It was designed by Michael Angelo Buonaroti, and painted by Sebastian del Piombo. But I dare not trust myself to enter upon its merits. I feel I have already transgressed my promise, and though, while I write, numbers of unnoticed paintings swim before my remembrance, I turn from them all, and resolutely walk up Cardinal Fesch's staircase to the French School.

The French School!—But why are the Poussins and Claude Lorraines ranked in it, because two

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* I am happy to hear that this celebrated painting, which is in the Church of the SS. Trinità at Rome, has been almost *miraculously* restored since I left Italy, by a secret process invented by Camuccini.

of them happened to draw their first breath in France? Why are painters, who studied, and lived, and died in Rome, whose every thought was derived from the classic forms of ancient sculpture and painting—the ruins of Grecian architecture—and those scenes of beauty, which no pencil but theirs could paint—why are those minds of genius, whose fancy fed on all that is most graceful in the glories of art, or enchanting in the majesty of nature, to be confounded with the common herd of the low, imitative, artificial artists of the French School?

There is, Heaven knows, nothing French about any of their works.

The Hours Dancing, the Repose in Egypt, and the Deluge, by Nicolas Poussin, bear, in their very names, evidence of their excellencies.

The Storm, by Gaspar Poussin, is in his best style; but the animals, in the foreground, do not seem to be his. There are several other fine compositions, but we saw them in very bad lights, and to unavoidable disadvantage.

Of the five Claudes, one is a gross and palpable imposition, and the authenticity of the rest is somewhat dubious. The "Morning" and "Evening" are beautiful compositions; but the original of the latter I have certainly seen, I think, in Lord Grosvenor's collection. They are, however, excellent copies; but some of the small ones, I suspect, would not be found in Claude Lorraine's *Liber Veritatis*.

Cardinal Fesch wishes to sell this large and valuable collection of paintings, for an annuity of £4000 per annum. I wish the British govern-

ment would become the purchasers ; it would form the nucleus of a grand National Museum of Paintings, which would speedily be formed, and even of itself, it would be invaluable for the cultivation of the arts. The works of the great masters are still too inaccessible in our country, to those who most require their study—young artists, whose early promise is often entirely blasted by the want of this inestimable advantage. Would Sir Joshua Reynolds ever have been the boast of our country, if he had not studied the works of the ancient masters, and the treasures of painting which Italy laid open to him ?

Madame Mére, for such is the name given from respect to the mother of Buonaparte, lives in the first floor of Cardinal Fesch's palace.

We obtained permission to view the paintings in her rooms, but were much disappointed in them.

LETTER LXVI.

PALLAZZO NUOVA DI TORLONIA—CAMUCCINI—CAMUCCINI'S COLLECTION.

NOBILITY is more certainly the fruit of wealth in Italy than in England. Here, where a title and estate are sold together, a man who can buy the one secures the other. From the station of a lacquey, an Italian who can amass riches, may rise to that of a duke. Thus, Torlonia, the Roman banker, has purchased the title and the estate of the Duca di Bracciano; fitted up the Palazzo Nuova di Torlonia, with all the magnificence that wealth can command; and a marble gallery, with its polished walls, lofty columns, inlaid floors, modern statues, painted ceilings, and gilded furniture, far outshines the faded splendour of the halls of the old Roman nobility.

The new gallery is adorned with Canova's Collossal Groupe of Hercules and Lychas, which is by no means one of his finest works. Like Guido, the *forte* style is not suited to his beautiful genius;

and the sculptor of Venus, with all her smiling train of Loves and Graces, could not do justice to the frantic Giant, maddened with the pain of the poisoned mantle, and hurling its wretched bearer into the gulf—a horrible subject, which would have suited Michael Angelo,—if it had suited statuary at all.

The fresco of the Marriage of Cupid and Psyche, by Camucccini,—incomparably the first living historical painter of Italy,—unhappily reminds one of Raphael's beautiful Fable in the Farnesina. But the composition is good, without plagiarism, and it is admirably designed. In design, indeed, Camuccini excels; and it is no light praise. I cannot say so much for the colouring; and on this account, the original sketch, which we saw at his own Studio, is far superior to the finished painting.

CAMUCCINI'S COLLECTION.

In his own house, he has a select collection of the works of the best masters, chosen with great taste and judgment, and forming a most delightful cabinet.

The Gods and Goddesses, *travesticd,* holding a sort of burlesque masquerade, is a very curious and valuable painting, by Gian Bellini, the master of Titian, and father of the Venetian School. As might be expected, the design is not very correct, but the expression is admirable, the colouring very good, and the landscape, which is painted by Ti-

tian, is, like all Titian's landscapes, truly beautiful. It is delightful to see how far the scholar surpassed the master; but this performance of Gian Bellini's is extremely original and clever. He was far superior to his brother, Gentil Bellini, whose fame, however, must have spread, even to the utmost depths of the Ottoman Seraglio, for Mahomet II. invited him to Constantinople, sat to him for his picture, loaded him with presents, and treated the painter of Venice with all the pomp and splendour of Asiatic magnificence. But it unluckily happened that Gentil painted a Decollation of St John the Baptist; and Mahomet, who, no doubt, had frequently studied the subject in nature, descried a defect in the manner in which the blood spouted out in the picture, and, after making his criticism, very coolly turned round, and ordered the head of a slave who happened to stand near him, to be instantly struck off before their eyes, by way of illustration, in order that Gentil might see his error. The unfortunate painter was so terrified at this sight, that he scarcely felt certain that his own head was upon his shoulders, and neither could sleep by night nor rest by day, till he obtained Mahomet's permission to return to Venice, where heads were not chopped off by way of experiment.

But I am forgetting Camuccini's Collection, where every painting is good, and offers subject for admiration and remark; but it would be endless to describe them. There is one by Guido, the Two Mary's weeping at the foot of the Cross. Dark-

ness covers the earth. The pale and cold form of the crucified Redeemer—the divine expression of his face, even in death—and the agony of the soul, that darkens the countenances of the Two Mary's—find their way to the heart.

In Guido's Madonna bending over the Sleeping Christ, the Madonna is badly coloured; but the infant is perfectly enchanting—the glossy smoothness and purity of the skin—the sweetness and innocence of the slumber—the health of the cheek—and the nature and grace of the attitude, are exquisite. Here, also, is a beautiful little groupe of Cupid, borne along by the Loves, who are sporting around him, by Guido.

Esther before Ahasuerus, from the Barberini Collection, is one of Guercino's finest works, and in his best style.

There is a beautiful little original sketch, by Raphael, in sepia; a mere scratch on a bit of parchment; which, more than the circle drawn at a stroke, marks the masterly genius of that incomparable painter.

It is not larger than my hand, yet what is there that the most finished painting should have, that is wanting to this hasty sketch? The astonishing genius of the composition, the chasteness of the design, and the powerful expression, I cannot sufficiently admire. The subject is the Deposition of Christ, in the moment in which his sainted form is to be deposited within its last earthly home, by his disciples. The grouping of such a number of fi-

gures in so small a space, the various expressions of the same passion; but, above all, the Virgin, in an agony of affliction, embracing the feet of Jesus,—her long hair falling over her head, and her figure, her action, her hidden countenance, more deeply expressive of the abandonment and desolation of grief, than all that the most laboured efforts of the pencil could otherwise have done—are far beyond my feeble praise.

There are, amongst some admirable and most interesting portraits, that of Scaliger, by Annibale Carracci; and Sebastian del Piombo, exquisitely painted, by himself; and one of the finest portraits, and most noble-looking men, I have ever seen.

There is also the Portrait of Lavinia, Marchesa di Pescara, by birth one of the Princesses of the Colonna family, said to be designed by M. A. Buonaroti, and painted by Marcello Venusti. This distinguished woman was the friend of Michael Angelo, and of every contemporary man of genius, and was herself a being of most extraordinary endowments. She was a celebrated improvisatrice, —and genius, sensibility, and intelligence beam on her beautiful face. She has chosen to be drawn with no symbols of science—a pretty little dog is sitting on her arm.

The Sketch of a Head, by Leonardo da Vinci; and an Ecce Homo, by Carlo Dolce, are extremely fine.

There is a beautiful Claude, a duplicate of one in the Louvre. A Sea-port, Boats, Ships, and

Figures on the Beach, illumined by those golden beams of sunset that Claude only could paint.

Camuccini possesses some exquisite frescos of Domenichino, which, for want of room, are locked up in a sort of coach-house, along with some marbles, of the most beautiful sculpture, brought from the Forum of Trajan. The alto rilievos are amongst the finest I ever saw.

LETTER LXVII.

CORSINI PALACE—FARNESINA, AND THE FARNESE.

You may generally form a tolerably correct conjecture of what a gallery will contain, as to subject, before you enter it.

A certain quantity of Landscapes, a great many Holy Families, a few Crucifixions, two or three Pietàs, a reasonable portion of Saint Jeromes, a mixture of other Saints and Martyrdoms, and a large assortment of Madonnas and Magdalens, make up the principal part of all the collections in Rome; which are generally composed of quite as many bad as good paintings, like this at the Corsini Palace.

How much more pleasure there would be in seeing them, if the good were placed apart for your inspection, and you were not sickened and disgusted with the quantity of rubbish you must sift, to find those really worth looking at!

I have been persecuted all this morning with a connoisseur, full of the cant of connoisseurship without one particle of real feeling for the beauties of the art—a man who walks about the world, seeing, and thinking, and feeling with other people's eyes,

and understanding, and taste—who does not say what he thinks, but thinks what he shall say—who is, in short, a determined dilettanti by rule. But, perhaps, what he is to me I am to you, for, though no connoisseur, I may be sufficiently wearisome; and as one's own sufferings dispose one to pity those of others, I will endeavour to mitigate yours, and give you a very short account of a very large gallery of pictures.

The first we saw was the Ecce Homo of Guercino, a painting, which notwithstanding the painful nature of the subject, and all its hackneyed representations; is full of such deep and powerful expression, is so elevated in its conception, and so faultless in its execution, that it awakens our highest admiration, and leaves an indelible impression on the mind.

There are two fine portraits, Paul III., when Cardinal Farnese, and Julius II., by Raphael. If the last be an original, which I am inclined to think, it is a *triplicate*, for I have seen one at Florence and another at Naples. There is besides an admirable portrait by Giorgione, and a Rabbit and a Cardinal by Albert Durer; two Cardinals by Domenichino, and a Pope by Velasquez—all good, though Velasquez does not, in this effort, reach his usual excellence in portrait painting; and Scipione di Gaeta has left a portrait here which would certainly not entitle him to the name of "the Vandyke of the Roman School."

Tintoretto's portrait of a Doge, I could not be brought to admire. That most rapid of painters

was also the most unequal, and his inequality was unpardonable, because wilful. With more avidity for money than fame, he would paint pictures to any price, and proportion their merit to their cost; and he, who could finish historical pieces faster than others could conceive them,* would throw portraits off his hands that would have disgraced his meanest apprentice. One of the Albanis in this collection, in which Cupid is supplicating Venus to restore his arrows which she has taken from him, is full of grace and beauty.

Morillo's Virgin and Child is a splendid piece of colouring, and nature itself; but there is nothing elevated or ideal in it. Let us fancy it a mother and baby in the lower walks of life, and there is no fault.

To Caravaggio's Holy Family the same remark applies. There is nothing holy in it; but it is a beautiful painting in its way, and true to nature. Fra' Bartolomeo's Holy Family is of a much higher class, and is one of the best of his works in Rome. Many other good, though not first-rate paintings, are dispersed about the rooms; amongst these, a spirited Tyger Hunt, by Rubens, in his best style, caught our attention. There are two beautiful little landscapes by Salvator Rosa, without his usual

* He completed his grand composition in the Scuola di San Rocco, before the other artists employed to paint the rest of the hall had half done their sketches. Nobody can judge of Tintoretto out of Venice, any more than of Raphael out of Rome.

mannerism and blackness. But the real treasures of the collection are the landscapes of Gaspar Poussin; one, in particular, which they call Rinaldo and Armida, certainly has something of the witchery of the enchantress about it, for it charmed me so much, that I have returned again and again to look at it.

This palace was the habitation of Christina of Sweden, and the room in which she died is distinguished by two columns of yellow painted wood. This collection of paintings has been formed since her death. So also has the library, which is a very fine one, and possesses a most valuable collection of prints; but I will spare you the description. Do not, however, forget to see it.

With that liberality characteristic of the Italians in every thing relating to literature and the arts, this library is open to the public.

The gardens are quite in the Italian style, very stiff and formal, divided with high evergreen hedges, decorated with bad statues, and furnished with multifarious *Giuochi d' Acqua*. The war is carried on most successfully against nature and taste; and the grounds are more frightful than you would, *à priori*, have thought it possible to have made them, beneath such a sky as this.

They extend to the summit of Mount Janiculum, and the view from the Casino at the top, is said to be very beautiful, though inferior to that from St Pietro in Montorio. I will not speak of what I have not seen—accidental circumstances have pre-

vented me from visiting it, but I have no doubt the prospect would amply recompense the toil of the ascent.

THE FARNESINA.

The Corsini is one of the many uninhabited palaces in the deserted region of Trastevere. Exactly opposite to it, in the long, wide, and grass-grown street of the Lungara, stands the Farnesina, a melancholy Casino, which was originally built for the scene of a grand entertainment, given by a rich Roman banker to Leo X. But it now, unfortunately, belongs to the Royal Family of Naples; and on its damp walls, the frescos of Raphael are shut up, and left to moulder in decay.

The first hall was painted by his pupils, but the designs are Raphael's.

These represent the story of Cupid and Psyche, and the whole of that beautiful fable from first to last—from the dawn of passion, through the wrath and machinations of Venus, the consent at last accorded by Jupiter to the supplications of the enamoured God for the union, the return of Psyche, conducted by Mercury, from her banishment in hell, to the highest heaven, and her presentation with the cup of immortality—till the nuptials are crowned with the banquet of the Gods, and followed by the triumphs of the Loves. All is told here. It is a complete poem; and I do not hesitate to say, that the beauty, the fancy, the poe-

tic spirit of this wonderful composition, has never been equalled. The red tints of Giulio Romano prevail in the colouring, and prove that he had the chief share in the execution. Raphael himself retouched most parts of it, and the figure of one of the Graces, whose beautiful shoulders and back are turned to us, bear evident marks of his pencil; and it is said, he finished it with great care, and esteemed it one of his happiest paintings.

It is said that Carlo Maratti did not retouch these figures, when he threw behind them the deep blue ground, which certainly injures their fine effect. However this may be, the Galathea in the next room remains exactly as it was left by the hand of Raphael. He not only designed, but executed it; and faded as is its colouring, that mind must be dead to the highest beauties of painting, that can contemplate it without admiration. The spirit and beauty of the composition, the pure and perfect design, the flowing outline, the soft and graceful contours, and the sentiment and sweetness of the expression, all remain unchanged; for time, till it totally obliterates, has no power to injure them.

The Goddess, standing on her shell, is borne through the waves by two Dolphins. Her form, her attitude, and expression, surpass all that your fancy can paint. The figure of the attendant Nereid, and of the triumphant Triton who embraces her, are beautiful beyond description.

The first of ancient sculptors would have seized the beautiful design and expression of these figures,

and transmitted them in their works, for the admiration of succeeding ages.

Fully to understand the perfection of the design, you should conceive what a beautiful bas relief, or gem, it would make.

You are shewn a gigantic black head on the wall, which, it is said, Michael Angelo drew one day while he was waiting here of Daniel di Volterra, in derision of the littleness of Raphael's design. This is extremely possible, for he had not the power to pourtray, nor perhaps to feel, the charm of grace and beauty, or the tenderness of expression. He could not move the gentler feelings of the soul. The bold, the colossal, the terrible, and the sublime were his; but feminine softness and sentiment, and gentleness and elegance, were unknown to him. These Raphael possessed; but not to these was he confined; for he had elevation, grandeur, dignity, and true sublimity.

There are frescos by Daniel di Volterra, and by Baldassar Peruzzi, in this room; but I dare not give any account of them, for, to confess the truth, though I have returned to the Farnesina times without number, and always with a sincere intention to examine them, I have never yet been able to bestow my attention, except for a transient glance,—upon any thing but the Galathea of Raphael.

THE FARNESE PALACE.

One little man, the M——— F———, the Neapolitan Ambassador, inhabits the whole immensity of the Farnese Palace. It would have been impossible to have admired a building, however beautiful, formed out of the overthrown grandeur of the Coliseum, and luckily, though the architecture of Michael Angelo Buonaroti, there is nothing to admire. Indeed, it is some gratification to see that it is quite as ugly as could be desired.

Its proprietors, the Kings of Naples, have carried to their kingdom all the ancient sculpture which formerly adorned it; but there is the sarcophagus of Cecilia Metella in the court, and some fine marble statues in an out-house; and there is, what they could not take away, the far-famed gallery, painted in fresco by Annibale Caracci, and for which, after eight years of unremitted labour, that great artist was rewarded, by the munificence of Cardinal Farnese, with five hundred crowns.

No one can form a just idea of the powers of Annibale Caracci, without seeing these astonishing frescos; which are in themselves a school of painting.

The first time I ever saw it, was at a ball given by the ambassador, soon after I came to Rome. The gallery was brilliantly lighted up, and my attention was frequently drawn from the beauty of the mortals below, to the beauty of the immortals above. Nor were the quadrilles we were dancing

on the floor at all to compare to the spirit of the graceful measures the Bacchantes were performing on the ceiling.

It is adorned with the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne, drawn in their golden cars, by tigers, and surrounded by a train of Satyrs, Fauns, and Bacchantes, led on by old Silenus. Classic fable forms the subject of every picture, and their numbers, variety, and beauty, are astonishing. The Triumph of Galathea, and Aurora carrying off her loved Cephalus in her car, are by Agostino Caracci, whose cultivated mind and poetic imagination are said to have materially assisted his brother in the composition of the whole.

It is, I believe, a mistake that their master, Ludovico Caracci, had any share in it, for he never was at Rome, excepting for a few weeks, during the whole time it was painting. The Perseus and Andromeda, and the Nymph and Unicorn, are said to be painted by Domenichino from Annibale Caracci's designs.

I will spare you all further description of these admirable frescos; but I cannot recal them to my memory without delight. I have spent hours in this gallery, and never left it without increased admiration for them.

LETTER LXVIII.

QUIRINAL PALACE—PALAZZO ALBANI—PALAZZO PONIATOWSKI—GEMS—STAIRCASE OF THE PALAZZO RUSPOLI—THE NOZZE ALDOBRANDINI—COLOSSAL FINGER AT PALAZZO ALTIERI—PALAZZO STOPPANI—RAPHAEL'S HOUSE—GUIDO'S AND GUERCINO'S AURORA—VILLA LUDOVISI, AND PALAZZO ROSPIGLIOSI.

THAT palace-building, ruin-destroying Pope, Paul III., began to erect the enormous palace on the Quirinal Hill; and the prolongation of his labours, by a long series of successive pontiffs, has made it one of the largest and ugliest buildings extant.

The French, during whose reign it was of course the Palazzo Imperiale, new-furnished a part of it; and another part of it, in the expectation of the threatened visit of the Emperor of Austria, has been recently fitted up for that great personage's reception, under the special direction of Cardinal G——— himself.

I cannot describe silk-hangings and rich carpets,

neither shall I stop to criticise the Secretary of State's taste as an upholsterer. Our object was to see the paintings; but I was edified to observe in one of the rooms, the consideration of the minister, in providing, for his Imperial Majesty's recreation, several suitable diversions. There was a solitaire board, and a little table to play at fox and geese.

As for the paintings, luckily for you there are not many good ones, and of these I shall mention few. Guercino's Saul and David, or the Madness of Saul, as I believe it is called, is designed with great force and truth; the colouring beautiful, and the expression powerful. It is one of his finest works.

Caravaggio's Christ disputing with the Doctors, merits similar praise.

The sketch of the Transfiguration is very fine. But the striking inferiority in the figure of our Saviour, leads me to doubt that it is, as is said, the original sketch by Raphael himself. I should rather think it a diminished copy by one of his pupils.

Domenichino's Ecce Homo is painfully fine. One of the persecuting Israelites is mocking the suffering Christ, whose brows, crowned with thorns, eyes filled with tears, cheeks stained with drops of blood, and hands bound with cords, are dreadful to behold.

St Peter and St Paul, by Fra' Bartolomeo, are conceived in real grandeur of style. St Jerome, by Spagnoletti, a subject repeated so often that the sight and sound become at last disgusting, is one of the very best of the few good ones I have seen.

There are some paintings by Carlo Maratti, which I was desired to admire; but I could not. The same thing happened when I went to see a painting in the Church of S. Carlo al Corso, which is reputed to be his masterpiece. In all his works there is, to me, wondrous insipidity. I never yet saw one that I had any wish to see again.

There is a small Chapel, painted by Guido. My expectations had been highly raised by previous description, and, as generally happens in that case, the reality fell short of them. The altar-piece is the Annunciation. It is full of beautiful expression; but the drawing is surely incorrect; and the Virgin's blue mantle breaks all harmony, a charm one rarely misses in Guido's painting. In the fresco there are some beautiful little Cherubs; and the Angels in the dome, faded though they be, are still divine; particularly one Angel, who is playing on some kind of heavenly instrument, her face raised to heaven, with that beautiful look of more than earthly expression, that Guido alone could give, and one beam of light illumining her countenance.

The chapel is, or rather was, entirely painted by Guido, (for it is about time to speak of these departed frescos in the past tense, as they are little better than ghosts now,) excepting some green saints on gold grounds, by Albani. Of their merit I say nothing, for if an angel were to come down from heaven to paint green figures on gold grounds, I am certain I could not admire the performance.

In one of the rooms, there is the plaister of the beautiful frieze in bas relief, of the Triumph of Alexander the Great, modelled for Napoleon, by Thorwaldsen, the first sculptor of modern times in rilievo. It will never now be executed in marble for the Quirinal Palace; but, it is to be hoped, the patronage of some other protector of the arts will enable the artist to perpetuate this grand work.

The gardens of the Quirinal Palace are adorned with parterres, planted, not with flowers, but with the Pope's arms and initials, and other pretty devices, formed of little white shells or stones; besides which, there are trees cut into divers shapes, melancholy Casinos, and absurd Giuochi d'Acqua.

PALAZZO ALBANI.

In one of the deserted rooms of the Palazzo Albani, near the Quattro Fontane, there is standing an ancient painting of Jupiter and Ganymede, in a very uncommon style,—uniting considerable grandeur of conception, great decision, and deep tone of colouring, which produce great effect. It is said to be Grecian.

Among the paintings, most of which are worth nothing, there are two Bacchanalian Feasts, by Giulio Romano, sketched with great spirit; and a wild coarse landscape of Salvator Rosa's; a Holy Family by Albani; another repetition of Raphael's Holy Family at Lord Stafford's and the Doria Palace, purporting also to be an original, but probably a copy by one of his pupils; and two paint-

ings by Pietro Perugino, one of which, a very fine specimen of his works, is composed of four parts, the Nativity in the middle, the Annunciation on each side, and the Crucifixion at the top.

In the court, there are some Pagan Altars, and inscriptions; a fine old Mask, and an unknown statue, in Consular robes.

In the Palazzo Poniatowski, in the Via della Croce, there are some good paintings, chiefly of the Flemish School. But the charm of this palace was, to me, the finest cabinet of gems I had ever seen, which, on the very first day of our acquaintance with him, Prince Poniatowski had the politeness spontaneously to offer to shew to us, though they are very rarely exhibited to strangers.

Count Blacas, the French Ambassador, has also some fine gems in his collection, which is not so large.

In the Palazzo Ruspoli, on the Corso, the ground-floor of which is now turned into an immense Caffé, there is a much admired staircase.

At No. 156, on the opposite side of the Corso, in the house of Signore Nelli, picture-dealer, is to be seen the famous Nozze Aldobrandini, the ancient painting of a Grecian marriage; originally found in the baths of Titus, and long in the Aldobrandini gallery.

On the staircase of the Palazzo Altieri, there is an ancient marble colossal finger, of such extraordinary size, that it is really worth a visit. In the Palazzo Verospi, I hear there is a fresco by Albani, which I have not yet seen; and the Palazzo Stop-

pani, the Palazzo Caffarelli, and the stables of the Palazzo Ghigi, are of the architecture of Raphael, and therefore interesting. Still more so is Raphael's house, built by himself. You pass it on the right hand side, in going to St Peter's, very near the Piazza Vaticano, in the widest of the two streets that lead from the Castle St Angelo. It may easily be known, by being the only house in that neighbourhood with a stone front, or with any thing like architectural ornament about it.

Before building it, he lived in the Via de' Coronari, in a house, No. 124, which is marked by a washed-out painting on the outside, intended for the portrait of Raphael, and painted by Carlo Maratti.

PALAZZO ROSPIGLIOSI

On the roof of the summer-house of the Palazzo Rospigliosi, is painted the celebrated fresco of Guido's Aurora. Its colouring is clear, harmonious, airy, brilliant—unfaded by time; and the enthusiastic admirer of Guido's genius may be permitted to hope, that this, his noblest work, will be immortal as his fame.

Morghen's fine engraving may give you some idea of the design and composition of this beautiful painting; but it cannot convey the soft harmony of the tints, the living touches, the brilliant forms, the realized dream of the imagination, that bursts, with all its magic, upon your enraptured sight in the matchless original. It is embodied poetry. The

Hours, that hand in hand encircle the car of Phœbus, advance with rapid pace. The paler, milder forms of those gentle sisters, who rule over declining day, and the glowing glance of those who bask in the meridian blaze—resplendent in the hues of heaven,—are of no mortal grace and beauty; but they are eclipsed by Aurora herself, who sails on the golden clouds before them, shedding "showers of shadowing roses" on the rejoicing earth; her celestial presence diffusing gladness, and light, and beauty around. Above the heads of the heavenly coursers, hovers the morning star, in the form of a youthful cherub, bearing his flaming torch. Nothing is more admirable in this beautiful composition than the *motion* given to the whole. The smooth and rapid step of the circling Hours, as they tread on the fleecy clouds; the fiery steeds; the whirling wheels of the car; the torch of Lucifer, blown back by the velocity of his advance; and the form of Aurora, borne through the ambient air, till you almost fear she should float from your sight; all realize the illusion. You seem admitted into the world of fancy, and revel in its brightest creations.

In the midst of such youth and loveliness, the dusky figure of Phœbus appears to great disadvantage. It certainly is not happily conceived. Yet his air is noble and godlike, and his free commanding action, and conscious ease, as he carelessly guides, with one hand, the fiery steeds that are harnessed to his flaming car, may, perhaps, compensate, in some degree, for his want of beauty;

for he certainly is not handsome; and I looked in vain for the youthful majesty of the God of day, and thought on the Apollo Belvidere. Had Guido thought of it, too, he never could have made this head, which is, I think, the great and only defect of this exquisite painting; and what makes it of more importance, is, that Apollo, not Aurora, is the principal figure—the first that catches the eye, and which, in spite of our dissatisfaction, we are to the last obliged to contemplate. The defects of his Apollo are a new proof of what I have very frequently observed, that Guido succeeded far better in feminine than in masculine beauty. His female forms, in their loveliness, their delicacy, their grace and sweetness, are faultless; and the beauty and innocence of his infants, have seldom been equalled;* but he rarely gave to manly beauty and vigour, a character that was noble.

From the Aurora of Guido, we must turn to the rival Aurora of Guercino, in the Villa Ludovisi.

* Domenichino was, in my opinion, the painter that most truly and beautifully represented the graces of childhood. There is a charm of nature, of playful, happy, unconscious innocence about them, that gives dreadful effect to the horrors of his Martyrdoms. In his St Agnes, and the Mysteries of the Rosario at Bologna, (which, after the Communion of St Jerome, are his great masterpieces of oil painting,) and in his fresco of S. Andrea and S. Sebastiano, at Rome, I was particularly struck with this. The Sleeping Babes of Guido, are quite a different subject and description of beauty, but exquisite in their kind.

In spite of Guido's bad head of Apollo, and in spite of Guercino's magic chiaro oscuro, I confess myself disposed to give the preference to Guido. In the first place, there is not the same unity of composition in Guèrcino's. It is very fine in all its parts; but still it *is* in parts. It is not so fine *a whole*, nor is it so perfect a composition, nor has it the same charm of fancy as Guido's. Neither is there the same ideal beauty in the Aurora. Guercino's is a mortal—Guido's a truly etherial being. Guercino's Aurora is in her car, drawn by two heavenly steeds, and the shades of Night seem to dissipate at her approach. Old Tithon, whom she has left behind her, seems half awake; and the Morning Star, under the figure of a winged genius, bearing his kindled torch, follows her course. In a separate compartment, Night, in the form of a woman, is sitting musing, or slumbering over a book. She has much of the character of a sybil. Her dark cave is broken open, and the blue sky and the coming light break beautifully in upon her and her companions, the sullen owl and flapping bat, which shrink from its unwelcome ray. The Hours are represented under the figure of children, fluttering about before the Goddess, and extinguishing the stars of night—a beautiful idea. Yet they are infinitely less poetic and less beautiful than the bright female forms which encircle the car of Day, in Guido's Aurora. It is, however, a masterpiece of painting; and but for the Aurora of Guido, we could have conceived nothing beyond the Aurora of Guercino.

In another room, in the same Casino, I was struck with admiration by a painting I had never heard of, Fame blowing her Trumpet, by Guercino.

The celebrated pieces of ancient statuary, at the Villa Ludovisi, which are invaluable because they are unique—(no other copies of them existing)—are all distinguished by names that have been proved with great learning and at great length, *not* to belong to them; and the names that *do* belong to them have not yet been found. You must, therefore, excuse my calling them by their usurped titles The first is Mars in repose, a beautiful figure. He is sitting with his foot resting on his helmet, his hand grasping a sword, and a shield by his side A little Love is seated at his feet. The figure is scarcely robust, fiery, or fierce enough for the boisterous god of war, nor does the expression accord with it. It is more like a youthful and a human warrior. It has been called Quirinus; and it seems to accord better with the son of Mars, the godlike founder of Rome, snatched from earth without tasting of death, than with Mars himself. But be it what it may, it is a statue of first-rate excellence. It has been restored by Bernini.

The groupe called Pætus and Arria, is exquisitely beautiful. She is sinking in death; the last breath of life seems to tremble on her lips, and a faint smile still illumines them. Her form, the perfection of female beauty and grace, is in the most interesting attitude it could be taken; half-clinging in death to him who has just plunged the dagger

into his breast—the blood springs from the wound, and the powerful contrast between the athletic strength of his form,—that strength which we know the death that he has inflicted must so speedily annihilate,—and the expiring figure of the lovely being he supports, is very striking and impressive. Taking the figures separately, they are perhaps faultless; but, considered as a groupe, it has one fault. In the point of view for the female, you lose the male figure altogether, and the reverse. It is, however, a noble piece of sculpture, whatever it be. It certainly is not Arria and Pætus, because the female figure has a fringed robe, a certain proof that she was of a foreign nation, and because the man has mustachios, which, at that period, were not worn by the Romans; besides, the critics have lately discovered that they are *Theban mustachios!* But independent of mustachios, the man is too infuriated for Pætus, who, so far from driving the sword into himself in this vengeful manner, never got courage to kill himself at all, but was executed. It is evident, too, from the expression of the work, that he has stabbed the woman, and, indeed, the wound is in her right shoulder; so that if she had committed suicide, it must have been in a most awkward manner, with her left hand.

Pætus and Arria was no subject for statuary; but if it had been, the sculptor would have chosen the moment, when, looking up to him with expiring love, she presented the dagger, and murmured, "It is not painful, my Pætus!"

She was the heroine of that beautiful story; but

the man is the hero of this groupe,—the female figure is secondary—therefore, for all those multifarious reasons, it is not Arria and Pætus.

The Theban mustachios have given rise to the supposition that this groupe represents Hæmon and Antigone, a favourite subject of Greek tragedy, and often seen upon gems; but Hæmon killed himself upon her tomb, therefore he could not be represented thus, as dying with her.

Winkelman imagines that it represents the obscure story of Canăce, and that the man is the soldier sent to her by her father, Æolus, on the discovery of her guilt, with the poniard, and his command to kill herself. But this is surely a still more unfortunate idea—for what right have we to suppose that the soldier was foolish enough to kill himself?*

The groupe of Papirius and his Mother has been, and will be, the subject of continual dispute amongst the connoisseurs. Some of them see in the boy's face, the roguish mirthful expression of his witty imposition. Winkelman, who at first maintained it to be Phædra and Hyppolitus, read in this same *mirthful* countenance, the excess of horror

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* Winkelman's gratuitous supposition of this unreasonable suicide is amusing enough. Comme "Aucun ecrivain ne fait mention du garde, nous pouvons nous figurer, par l'inspection de l'ouvrage, que ce soldat, n' ayant pas été instruit de l'objet de sa mission, remit d'un air triste la fatale Epée a Canacé, et qu'il s'en est percé le sein, aprés avoir vue que la Princesse s'etoit tuée."—A likely story!

with which he heard the avowal of her incestuous passion. Afterwards, he finds it out to be Electra and Orestes; and then the expression of this same "mirthful," and "horror-struck face," is changed to extreme affliction; and according to him, "On voit les yeux d'Oreste inondés de larmes, et ses paupiéres gouflés, à force d'avoir pleuré. Il en est de meme d'Electra," &c. It may be so, but I saw none of these expressions in the poor boy's face; and certainly, they cannot all be there.

The female is a great deal the tallest and oldest of the two, and the difference in their age seems irreconcileable with that of brother and sister, though Electra was older than Orestes. But she has the air of a matron—he of a boy—and her look and caressing manner would seem to indicate a mother's feeling. But then, say the critics, "her hair is cut, which was esteemed infamous among the Romans; and, therefore, she cannot be the mother of Papirius." Besides, had the boy been Papirius *Prætextatus*, he would have been represented with the *Prætexta;* for, it was on the occasion of being invested with that juvenile robe, that he was taken by his father to the senate; and, on his return, he eluded the interrogatories of his mother as to what had passed there, with the tale, that they had been deliberating whether the men should have two wives, or the women two husbands—which sent her, with all her female friends and acquaintance, in a body, next day, to the senate, to implore, that the law should be for the women to

have two husbands—to the inexpressible amusement of the conscript fathers.

There is another reason why it cannot represent Papirius and his mother, because the ancient sculptors never chose a subject from Roman history.* But it is much easier to prove what it is not, than what it is,—we may be content to confess, that we know nothing about it; and to call it, for want of a better name, Electra recognizing Orestes.

It is, however, certain that it is a groupe of singular beauty, and the work of Menelaus, a Grecian sculptor, whose name is inscribed upon it.

We saw the statues and paintings of the Villa Ludovisi only once, and in haste; and we were indebted to the kindness of Canova, who conducted us there, for seeing them at all. But this privilege is now denied even to him; and the most respectful requests of the most distinguished foreigners, for permission to view them, are treated by Prince Piombino with contemptuous neglect, or answered with haughty refusal. It is not, that strangers can intrude upon him, for he resides constantly in Rome. And such is his dread lest they should obtain admittance by bribery to see them, that he has been known, on a wet day, to walk under an umbrella, through miry lanes, and watch within sight of the gate—a spy upon his own servants. What would this tyrant have been upon a throne!—The

* Vide Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art. liv. vi. chap. 6. § 28.

only excuse that can be alleged for him is, that he is supposed to be mad; but it is unfortunate when such a madman, instead of being locked up himself, has it in his power to lock up such works of art.

The Villa Ludovisi stands in one of the most beautiful situations in the neighbourhood of Rome, for, though enclosed within the walls of the city, it is completely in the country. The view from the top of the Belvedere Casino is one of the most varied beauty. The blue mountains rising behind the dark shade of the pines and cypress, which form the fore-ground——but I forgot that I must not describe. I see you yawn already.

These pines and cypress are ever green and ever beautiful;—but, in all directions of right lines and angles, extend tall hedges of ilex and laurel, clipped into green walls, impenetrably thick, and inconceivably dull. With two miles of pleasure-ground, close to a capital city, on such a soil, and beneath such a sky, what would an English villa and its gardens have been? But gardening, which is, in our country, the art of creating landscape, is, in Italy, the art of marring it.

In my enthusiasm for the Aurora of Guido, I forgot to mention the paintings of the Rospigliosi Palace.

You are taken, reluctantly, from the contemplation of the Aurora, into an adjoining room in the same Casino, to see Domenichino's Adam and Eve in Paradise—a very poor production indeed. The

whole of an immense piece of canvas is crowded with a heterogeneous assemblage of all the birds of the air and beasts of the field, and reptiles that ever crawled upon the earth; and in the middle of them stand our first Parents, in a most unenviable situation.

Some bad bronze heads, and other wretched scraps of sculpture, and a Diana and Minerva, more frightful than any thing you can conceive, are stuck round the room. They were found in the baths of Constantine, upon a part of which this palace was built. Here is a pretty little bronze horse, also found in them,—the work, probably, of a better age. The beautiful bas reliefs, which adorn the exterior of the Casino, and are unmercifully exposed to all the injuries of the weather, are of the age of Trajan; and the larger ones are said to have been brought from his Forum. They are placed at such a height from the ground, that the beauty of the sculpture is lost.

Two magnificent columns of Rosso Antico, the only ones of this size in the world, are judiciously wedged into the wall of the Casino, and so totally hidden in it, that they would pass unobserved were they not pointed out. If they were made of painted stucco, they would look quite as well in such a situation, as this precious marble—for the beauty of the material is totally lost.

The palace itself contains a scanty collection of paintings—generally passed over in haste,—for what stranger can view them with patience, before

he sees the Aurora; and after it, how can he admire them? Among them, however, are some paintings of considerable merit.

Guido's Andromeda is one of these. It is seldom Guido erred from want of expression, but she is surely too calm, and too placid, for such a situation. Neither Perseus winging his flight to her rescue, nor the Sea Monster raising its jaws to devour her, seem to have the power to agitate her with hope or fear. But she is Beauty's self; and it is a painting that irresistibly forces admiration.

Domenichino's Triumph of David, is not, on the whole, one of his finest compositions. The figures are larger than nature. One of the daughters of Israel, who welcomes him with the harp and the timbrel, has all the living brightness, and beautiful expression, of his pencil.

Samson, pulling down the Temple on the Philistines, by L. Caracci, is extremely admired; but the subject is, I think, a peculiarly unfortunate one for painting. The gigantic columns, and tumbling roofs, yielding to the force of a single man of human size, has something in it of revolting impossibility and disproportion.

Eighteen ancient frescos, found in the baths of Constantine, once adorned this palace. The servants here say, the Prince Rospigliosi carried them off with him to Florence, where he now resides; and his servants there, maintained they were at Rome. They are not now to be seen or heard of any where.

LETTER LXIX.

ROMAN VILLAS—RAPHAEL'S CASINO, AND FRESCOS—BORGHESE GARDENS—ITALIAN AND ENGLISH GARDENING—VILLAS ALDOBRANDINI, ALTIERI, GIRAUD, PAMFILI DORIA, AND LANTI—FRENCH ACADEMY—UTILITY OF AN ENGLISH ONE—VISIT TO MONTE MARIO—VILLA MADAMA—PASTOR FIDO RAPHAEL'S FRESCOS

SINCE I have been in Rome, many are the visits I have paid to the Casino of Raphael, which was the chosen scene of his retirement, and adorned by his genius. It is about half a mile from the Porta del Popolo. The first wooden gate in the lane, on the right of the entrance into the grounds of the Villa Borghese, leads you into a vineyard, which you cross to the Casino di Raffaello; for it still bears his name, though it now belongs to Signore Nelli. It is unfurnished, except with casks of wine, and uninhabited, except by a *Contadina*, who shews it to strangers.

We passed through two rooms, painted by his scholars;—the third, which was his bed-room, is entirely adorned with the work of his own hands.

It is a small pleasant apartment, looking out on a little green lawn, fenced in with wood irregularly planted. The walls are covered with arabesques, in various whimsical and beautiful designs,—such as the sports of children; Loves balancing themselves on poles, or mounted on horseback, full of glee and mirth; Fauns and Satyrs; Mercury and Minerva; flowers; and curling tendrils, and every beautiful composition that could suggest itself to a mind of taste; or a classic imagination, in its most sportive mood. It is impossible to describe to you the spirit of these designs. The cornice is supported by painted Caryatides. The coved roof is adorned with four medallions, containing portraits of his mistress, the Fornarina—it seemed as if he took pleasure in multiplying that beloved object, so that wherever his eyes turned her image might meet them. There are three other paintings, one representing a Terminus with a target before it, and a troop of men shooting at it with bows and arrows, which they have stolen from unsuspecting Cupid, who is laying asleep on the ground, his quiver empty beside him. One or two roguish-looking Loves are creeping about on the ground, one of them bearing a lighted torch. The marksmen are all bending forward, and some are quite horizontal, with their feet in air.

The second picture represents a figure, apparently a God, seated at the foot of a couch, with an altar before him, in a temple or rotunda; and from gardens which appear in perspective through its

open intercolumniations, are seen advancing a troop of gay young nymphs, with something of the air of Bacchantes, bearing on their heads vases full of fresh-gathered roses. I cannot make the image out to be a female, or else I should have supposed it to be the Feast of Flora; therefore, for want of a better explanation, I concluded it meant for the Feast of the God of the Gardens.

The last, and best of these paintings, represents the nuptials of Alexander the Great, and Roxana. I never saw a figure of more exquisite loveliness,—more touching modesty and grace. She is seated at the foot of a couch, a little Love beside her is drawing off a veil which yet half-conceals her beauty. Hymen, with his saffron robes and torch, leads in Alexander, disarmed, but wearing his helmet. A crowd of attendant Loves are employed in their service, some are carrying off his sword, &c.; and one, a comical little Love, has put on his heavy coat-of-mail, which is ridiculously large for it, and having tumbled down, is unable to get up again.

I have perhaps described with too much minuteness the Casino of Raphael; but in general he painted for others,—here he painted for himself,—and it is interesting to see those sports of his mind, and to trace the fond delight with which he amused his leisure hours in decorating his home, the scene of his pleasures.

Julius Cæsar bequeathed his gardens, at his death, to the Roman people; the Borghese princes do more,—they give them in their lives; and the

only difference I can see in their title to them, and that of every denizen of Rome, is, that the former have the expence of keeping them up, and the latter the enjoyment of them. The citizen enters when he pleases,—on foot, on horseback, or in a carriage; and he is, to all intents and purposes, their uncontrouled master.

A park would be a more appropriate term in English, than gardens, for grounds that occupy nearly three miles in circuit. They are situated on the broad summit of the Pincian Hill, immediately without the walls of Rome, which enclose a part only of its wide and broken extent. The Borghese Gardens are professedly laid out in the English style; and though they certainly are not English, they are, from being devoid of trees clipped into shapes, and long strait avenues enclosed between evergreen walls, by far the most beautiful pleasure-grounds in Rome. I was too much rejoiced to see once more the unmutilated, untortured shades of nature, though ungrouped and unembellished by the hand of taste, to quarrel with the melancholy monotony of the scene,—with the formality of the stagnant pond, in which is erected the Temple of Esculapius,—the woe-begone Nereids, that are obliged "to sit on rocks, and muse o'er flood and fell," —the modern ruins that are tumbling about like bad actors, vainly trying to be tragical,—or the mock Aqueducts that have been built up only that they might be pulled down.

There is one of the fine arts which is truly of Bri-

tish growth, and in which, by the unanimous voice of Europe, we excel all other nations—the art of gardening. We have attained our perfection in it by the only means in which perfection in any of the fine arts is attainable,—following simplicity, and obeying nature. This is the golden rule of taste. These are the only guides to beauty. But those who have sought it in distorting the lovely features of nature, and substituting the paltry conceits of affectation for beautiful simplicity, have wandered far from their aim. Such have been the means of our success; its remoter causes I cannot but attribute to that fondness for domestic enjoyment which leads us to embellish every thing that surrounds our home, or that can add to its pleasures. Our country-houses, as well as gardens, are confessedly unrivalled; they are the admiration of all enlightened foreigners, and their superiority arises from being contrived, not like those of other nations, for the wonder of visitors, but for the happiness of their inmates,—not for show, but for enjoyment. Long, oh long, may it be the boast of England, that while other lands can shew more splendid palaces, hers are filled with happier homes!

It is indeed striking to a native of our wintry island, on coming to a climate where unbidden beauty springs around, and scarcely asks the hand of cultivation, to see, instead of smiling shrubberies, varying walks, scented flowers, budding blossoms, and all the beautiful creations of English taste,—nothing but clipt evergreens, formal hedge-

rows, doleful fish-ponds, spirting fountains, and frightful statues. With the sun and the soil of Italy, what a paradise could be created by English gardening!

It does not appear to me that the ancient Romans had a much better taste in gardening than the modern Italians. Pliny, in his laboured description of his Tuscan Villa, tells us its gardens were adorned with "figures of various animals, cut in box; evergreens shaped into a thousand different forms; sometimes into letters expressing different names; walls and hedges of clipped box; and trees cut into a variety of shapes;" so that what we abuse as Dutch, is really classical. Nothing, however, can make it otherwise than hideous; and, be it the praise of our own nation to have introduced true taste, and invented the art of landscape gardening.

The drive through the grounds of the Villa Borghese is very pleasant; the road winds along through deep evergreen groves of the ilex, the laurel, and the cypress, whose tall spiral form rises far above every other tree, and contrasts beautifully with the pale and drooping weeping-willows that bathe their flexile branches in the clear waters. But the Columbar cypress itself, scarcely overtops the majestic pine,* which bears on high its broad horizontal head, and throws around its deep and spreading shade. This beautiful tree, which grows

* The *pinus pinea* of Linnæus.

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to such perfection in the climates of the south, gives to the scenery about Rome its peculiar charm. It has a character that no other possesses; and nothing can be more in harmony with the melancholy grandeur of the ruins it loves to accompany, than its dark and motionless beauty, and its luxuriant depth of shade. It is the same which enters so beautifully into the composition of Claude Lorraine's landscape. Such scenery as the Borghese Gardens should never be visited except when the sun shines forth unclouded; then the contrast between the brightness of its rays, the deep blue of the heavens, and the thick shade of the groves, is seen in all its beauty.

The Casino, at the extremity of the drive, is well worth seeing; not for any thing it contains, for its famous treasures of art are all gone, but for its own magnificence. The splendour of its marbles, and the beauty of its halls, are unimpaired. Instead of its masterpieces of Grecian sculpture, we see now a Curtius on horseback, throwing himself into the gulf; and two groups of Bernini, a scowling David with his sling, and Apollo and Daphne, who is in the act of undergoing the process of her transformation into a laurel. Amongst some paintings of Luca Giordana and Orizonte, I remarked two beautiful winter landscapes by a painter not known to Fame, and whose name I have unluckily forgotten. Till I saw these, I had always thought it impossible to paint a good snow-piece, but my prejudice is so far overcome, that I allow these to

be the only good ones I ever saw, or expect to see.

There are a great many villas in the immediate neighbourhood of Rome, and even within its walls; but I cannot conceive that a particular description of them all could be amusing to you. Every villa has one Casino, and often more in its grounds. But, perhaps, you may not have a very clear idea of what a Casino is. It is a building, generally two stories high, and containing a suite of entertaining rooms, for company and recreation, but no sleeping rooms; and they are generally fitted up with all the luxury of painting and sculpture.

The Villa Aldobrandini is now in the possession of General Miollis. The gardens are gay and pleasant, and kept in excellent order. A considerable number of ancient statues and inscriptions, are arranged in one part of them. There seemed to be a great multiplication of Bacchusses, Dianas, Mercuries, Venusses, and the common herd of statues; but nothing remarkable, either for rarity or beauty. However, I must confess, that I only gave them a hasty glance, for my whole soul was in the flower beds. It was silly enough to be sure, but there was such a delightful profusion of roses and lilies, and jonquils and hyacinths, that when Flora herself, with all her fresh-born beauties, appeared before me, I could not think of musty old representations of the rest of the gods and goddesses; and I was still regaling my senses with their sweets, when the rest of the party returned from the house,

where there is a large collection of paintings, and assuring me there was not one picture worth seeing, dragged me away with them.

In the weed-covered grounds of the Villa Altieri, which are unconscious of flowers, there are some remains of ancient buildings, that have occasioned much dispute among the antiquaries, who have never been able to settle whether they belonged to the *Ludus Matutinus*, or place of exercise for the soldiers—or to public baths that were contiguous to it—or to the Baths of St Helena, which might have extended here—or to fifty other things.

In an excavation that was made here, about the end of the seventeenth century, a chamber was discovered, adorned with arabesques and landscapes; and a very large painting was saved, which was in the collection of Cardinal Massimi, and, I believe, was purchased by the late Lord Bristol.

The deserted and ruinous Casino contains nothing, excepting one very small ancient painting of a man and horse,—a common sepulchral device. The design is good, but the colouring faded. The servants say, and they are right, that it was brought from the tomb of Ovid; but Venuti asserts it was found in the ruin in the garden.*

On the deserted field of the Esquiline is the Villa Polombara, where the famous Discobolus of the Palazzo Massimi, and the more famous Melea-

* Venuti, Parte i. capo. 7.

ger, are said to have been discovered. It once belonged to Queen Christina of Sweden, who has left upon the little door-way, exactly opposite to the Ruin called the Trophies of Marius, a curious record of her credulity. It consists of a collection of unintelligible words, signs, and triangles, given her by some alchymist, as the rule to make gold, and which, no doubt, he had found successful, having obtained from her, and probably many other votaries, abundance of that precious metal in exchange for it. But as she could make nothing of it, she caused it to be inscribed here, in case any passenger, wiser than herself, should develope the mystic signs of this golden secret.

All these villas, and their grounds, are within the walls of Rome; so also is the Villa Mattei, on the Cœlian Hill, now in the possession of the Prince of Peace; whose name, so famous, or rather so infamous in history, has fallen into such insignificance, that his very existence would be forgotten, but for the diurnal rattle of his coach and six. One of the pleasures which diversify his retired and monotonous life, seems to be adorning this villa, which he visits every day. His improvements, and the possession of an Egyptian obelisk, and the famous Head of Seneca, certainly render it worthy a visit.

The Villa Giraud in Trastevere, has (O, rare invention!) a Casino, built in the shape of a ship of war, which stands most appropriately and pacifically on dry land!

The Villa Pamfili, on Monte Janiculum, com-

mands, from its summit, a most beautiful prospect, and has in its gardens a theatre of fountains; each of which, when set a-going, performs its part, by spirting out driblets of water; not to mention the glory of the whole, a statue of a Faun, standing in a summer-house, with a barrel organ hid behind it, and set in motion by water, which grinds music that you are in duty bound to suppose proceeds from the said marble Faun, though he is neither singing nor playing, and the flute in his hand is at arms length from his mouth.

The Villa Lanti, also on Janiculum, is rather better worth seeing than these. It was built by Giulio Romano, and it contains some small paintings, executed partly by himself, and partly by his pupils; and it is clean, which is the most remarkable thing of all.

The magnificent Villa Medici, almost the only modern villa on the Collis Hortulorum, is now converted into the French Academy, where, at the charge of their own government, a certain number of young French artists of promise, enjoy the inestimable advantages of a few years study at Rome. I think this institution as honourable to that nation, as the want of it is disgraceful to our own. The illiberality, and the pitiful penurious spirit, our government has always manifested in every thing relative to the arts, form a remarkable contrast to its lavish expenditure in all other respects. The utility of such an academy is too obvious to require comment. Taste and genius are confined

to no rank; and, in general, in all countries, men who have attained eminence in the arts, have risen from the middle and lower classes of society. To such men, therefore, in our remote island, poverty will, in most instances, be an effectual bar to the prosecution of their studies in Italy, without which, I do not hesitate to say, it is not to be expected that they should ever become great artists. Thus those who the most require such advantages, are entirely cut off from them. But this is an ungrateful subject, and I will not enlarge upon it.

To return to the Roman villas—none of which, I think, remain to mention, excepting those upon Monte Mario.*

It was a beautiful day in February, when spring already "purpled all the earth with verdant flowers," and the blossoms of the peach and the nectarine, by the road side, shed their fragrance through the air; that we ascended Monte Mario, which lies about two miles to the north-west of Rome. The ascent is too steep for a carriage, and we dismounted and walked to the top. It is from this hill that the majesty of the Vatican is seen to most advantage; and from hence, if I were a painter, I would draw it. The summit of Monte Mario is inclosed, in the grounds of an old villa, but is fortunately left

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* Monte Mario, a hill about a mile and a half to the north of Rome, is little noticed by classic writers. It is believed to have been anciently the Clivus Cinnæ. Vide NARDINI, *Roma Antica.*

unmolested to its native carpet of soft green turf, which is canopied by ancient evergreens, beneath whose dark shade the proud dome of St Peter's at its base,—the windings of the Tiber,—Rome,—with the distant mountains that bound the Campagna, and the soft purple light the skies of Italy shed over the scene, form a most striking and beautiful picture.

On the other side of the hill, about half way up, stands the Villa Madama, which, like every possession of the royal house of Farnese, is in a state of decay, that presents a dreary contrast to the grandeur of the scale on which it is constructed. The frescos, designed by Raphael and executed by Giulio Romano, are mouldering on the mildewed walls of its porticos and saloons; but these designs are still most beautiful, though their colouring is faded, and their spirit gone.

They consist of a series of beautiful little pictures, representing the Sports of Satyrs and Loves, and various subjects of mythology and fable. The paintings in the portico, and the frieze of one of the chambers, are very fine; and I cannot but regret, that designs so beautiful should not be engraved, before their last traces disappear for ever.

It was in the groves, that surrounded the Villa Madama, that the Pastor Fido of Guarini was represented for the first time, before a brilliant circle of princes and nobles, such as these scenes will see no more, and Italy itself could not now produce.

Even to the lofty height of Monte Mario, and to the villas, which crown the ancient hills of Rome, most part of which are contained within the walls, the gradually increasing scourge of the Malaria has now spread its baleful influence, and broods over their summer beauty, like a lurking Demon of Destruction.

LETTER LXX.

VILLA ALBANI.

THE magnificent galleries and porticos of the Villa Albani, are filled with the most precious collection of ancient sculpture, that any private cabinet ever contained; and even those great public museums, which have been accumulated by the labour of nations and of ages, can scarcely boast any more rare and valuable than this, still is; though it has been robbed of many of its choicest treasures.

Its beauty and rarity, so strongly excited the cupidity of the French, that, although private property, they had carried off upwards of two hundred pieces of sculpture, and had packed up many more ready for embarkation, when the unexpected reverses of their Emperor drove the plunderers beyond the Alps.

The diminished fortune of their present proprietor, the Prince Albani, rendered him unable to incur the heavy expence of their re-transportation and the inimitable relievo of Antinous is the only one that has been brought back.

Impoverished as this museum is, so inexhaustible are its treasures, that I have spent whole mornings in its beautiful cabinets, and reluctantly left them only with the last light of day, without feeling that I have yet sufficiently seen it. Many collections, indeed, are more numerous; but none are so choice. In general, with much that is beautiful, there is more that is bad; even the magnificent halls of the Vatican contain a good deal of very *mediocre* sculpture; so also does the Capitol,—the gallery of Florence,—and that still finer collection —the Studii of Naples. But here there is scarcely a single piece that is not remarkable either for its rarity or beauty, and their intrinsic value is only exceeded by the taste and elegance with which they are arranged. Volumes might, and have been written upon this museum. It was the school of the celebrated Winkelman, and he has left so complete and critical an account of its sculptures,* that it would be the height of presumption in me to particularize them; indeed, I almost feel afraid to speak of them at all, lest I should be led to dwell too long upon what is so interesting in inspection, and so dull in description.

The villa, or casino, in which they are placed, by far the most beautiful building of the kind I

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* Chiefly in his Monumenti Inediti, and also in the Storia dell' Arte. The reader will find a *more* than complete catalogue of them in the *Indicazione Antiquaria,* which contains those taken away.

have seen at Rome, possesses a light polished elegance, and a decorated beauty, which is truly Italian, and accords with the scene, the climate, and the statuary.

In the principal portico, which is sustained by forty-four magnificent columns of various marbles, stand a line of emperors; rare bassi rilievi are enchased in the walls; Egyptian Sphinxes rest on the marble pavement, and at the far extremity appears Juno Lucina, descending from Olympus to Erebus, bearing her torch; her drapery blown back by the wind—her feet in air—(the whole figure being advanced in front of the lofty pedestal,) and her easy rapid gliding motion through mid air, are represented with so much art, that the statue actually seems to move.

The unique Statue of Domitian, the only one which has escaped destruction, was found broken, and buried under ground, the limbs, head, and body sundered, and hacked all over with the furious blows of axes, (the marks of which are still visible,) proofs of the violence that had been used to destroy every image of the monster whose crimes had disgraced humanity.

Attached to the lower part of the building, are two galleries, chiefly filled with Termini, or Hermes,*

* It can scarcely be necessary to observe, that all the gures of this description, bore originally the head of cury, from which they derived their generic name. were very common among the ancients, and some ha

of Grecian philosophers or poets; many of which are unknown, and many of very doubtful authenticity. The most interesting I saw, were the fine genuine head of Epicurus, the Mercury with the double inscription, and the very ancient and curious Statue of the Priestess of Isis, bearing a sistrum of bronze and marble prepericula; its fine drapery, of the kind called Etruscan, is more properly of the early Grecian school, and the head bears a close resemblance to those of the Egina marbles.

By far the finest statues in the lower part of the building, are the two exquisitely beautiful Caryatides, representing Grecian Canephoræ, or basket-bearers, carrying their offerings to the Temple of Venus, or Pallas. They were found on the Appian Way, near the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and must have once adorned some Roman villa or sepulchre.

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posed that they were even used as posts for gates and fences, about their pleasure grounds. To their multiplicity we owe many heads of the ancients, which would otherwise have been irrecoverably lost. These figures are nearly of the human height, with heads only; the rest of the marble unformed, and sloping gradually down to the base, as if the man had been immured in a marble case up to the shoulders. In fact, horrible —incredibly horrible as the tale may seem, this fate was once endured by a human being. An unfortunate, but guilty woman, was walled up alive in this manner by her own son, her head only being left at liberty; and fed with bread and water for the space of about thirteen months, when she died. The fact is mentioned in Ginguene's *Hist. Literaire de l'Italie*; but I cannot remember in what part of it.

According to the inscriptions upon them, they are the work of Criton and Nicolaus, Grecian sculptors, who are supposed to have come to Rome before the death of Julius Cæsar.

I must pass over the beautiful ancient copies of the Cupid bending his Bow, and the Faun of Praxiteles; the two Ptolemies of Egypt,—the unique Nemesis,—the figure of Marsyas, suspended to a tree, the living victim of the vengeance of Apollo —the rilievo, in Rosso Antico marble, of Diogenes in his Tub talking to Alexander the Great,—Dædalus forming the wings of Icarus,—and a thousand other admirable works,—and conduct you to the grand rilievo of Rome Triumphant, guarding the principal entrance.

The pretended Statue of Brutus, but more probably of a Roman actor, and several others here, will not detain you long; but the colossal masks, the ancient paintings, the curious mosaics, and the rare bassi rilievi, which decorate the walls, will greatly impede your progress up the staircase.

In the oval vestibule at the top, between the two noble columns of giallo antico, appears the celebrated beautiful little Statue of the Faun. The grand rilievo represents the Sacrifice of Mithra, an exquisite piece of sculpture; and the ancient marble frieze, all the minutiæ of the Circus rāces.

A little room is furnished with singularly beautiful tapestry, executed from designs of the Flemish School, at Rome, by one of Cardinal Alban's own servants, who discovered an uncommon talent for

the art, and, encouraged by his master, established a manufactory of it, which has long since perished.

In the most beautiful little apartment, or cabinet, as it is called, that was ever beheld, are contained some of the choicest treasures of art. The beauty of the little bronze Statue of the Farnese Hercules, the Pallas, the Diana, the Canopus, the exquisite little Faun with the Thyrsis, the Diogenes, the Expiation of Hercules, the alabaster busts and inimitable bassi rilievi, are all surpassed by the famous *Apollo Sauroctonos*, which, in the judgment of Winkelman, is the original of Praxiteles, described by Pliny, and the most beautiful bronze statue now left in the world.* It was found in a perfect state upon Mount Aventine, but the trunk of the tree and the lizard are wanted. These are preserved in an ancient copy, said to be very inferior, which was in the Borghese Collection.†

There is a curious little sculpture in Emerald *Plasm*, (Plasma di Smeraldo,) a sort of green crystallization, (not, however, according to mineralogists, bearing any affinity to the emerald,) said to be the only known specimen of this substance.

It is impossible for me to describe to you the richness, delicacy, beauty, and taste, either of this costly cabinet itself, of the next that follows it, or

* Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, liv. vi. chap. 2. v. 47—50.

† The Borghese Collection was given up by Prince Borghese to the French. A part of it is to be found in the Louvre. The rest is, Heaven knows where!

of the great hall. I might tell of ceilings painted by Mengs, of floors paved with pictured mosaics, of walls inlaid with precious alabasters, of columns and pilasters of polished porphyry and ancient marbles, of mirrors, of gilding, of niches, and of gems without end; but I could never convey to you the effect to the eye of such magnificence, united with such taste—of materials so rich, and architecture so beautiful.

The finest Statue of Minerva in the world, stands in this noble hall. Nothing can exceed the majesty of the figure, nor the graceful fall of the drapery. The singularity of the Ægis and the helmet, has been learnedly criticised by Winkelman.

The noble Statue of Jupiter, the beautiful bassi rilievi of the Triumph of M. Aurelius, the Choice of Hercules, Dædalus and Icarus, and all the admirable sculptures here I must pass over unnoticed, and conduct you into a little room, where, in the marble chimney-piece, is fixed the famous rilievo of Antinous, crowned with lotus flowers. It is no exaggeration to say, we can return to gaze at it for ever with unwearying admiration. This exquisite fragment, it is supposed, has formed a part of the Apotheosis of Antinous; the hand, —in which the restorer has now placed a garland of flowers,—seems, from its position, to have held the reins, and the figure to have been placed in a car of triumph, in which manner the ancients as commonly represented the elevation of their heroes to gods, as borne on the wings of the eagle. "As fresh, and as highly-finished, as if it had just

left the hands of the sculptor, this work, after the Apollo and the Laocoon, is, perhaps, the most beautiful monument of antiquity which Time has transmitted to us."*

I shall conclude by mentioning the famous Thetis, which was discovered by Cardinal Albani, in making an excavation at the Villa of Antoninus Pius, at Lanuvium, "though assuredly a work of a date far anterior to the age of the Antinous, being undeniably one of the most beautiful figures of antiquity."†

From the attitude—an oar in the left hand, resting on a Triton, and one of the legs a little raised, as if riding on the prow of a vessel—Winkelman conjectures, that, in all probability, it represents Thetis, though it may be the Gnidian Venus, (surnamed the Venus of prosperous navigation.) Winkelman goes into ecstasies about it. "In no female statue," he exclaims, "scarcely even in the Venus di Medicis, do we see, as in this, la *fraicheur* et l'innocence de la plus tendre jeunesse," &c. and yet this statue, with all the 'bloom of tender youth,' had no head!—But he supplies the want with a head like a rose-bud. "Upon this beautiful body," he adds, "l'imagination aime à placer une tête semblable à un bouton de rose qui commence à s'epanouir," &c. &c.

The head which the restorer has placed upon it,

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* Winkelman, Hist. de l'Arte, liv. vi. chap. 7. § 28.
† Ibid. liv. vi. chap. 7. § 39.

is not in the least like a rose-bud; but when a fine ancient statue has but an indifferent modern head, which often happens, the best way is to look at it as if it had none. The lower part of the body is covered with drapery, thrown gracefully over the left arm, and falling in light and transparent folds, which betray what they seem to conceal, offer to view one of the most beautiful female forms that art ever produced. And Winkelman hopes he may be forgiven "for believing, that the poets of Greece alluded to this very statue, when they spoke of the limbs of Thetis, as the model of beauty. The man of genius," he proceeds, "at the sight of this beautiful Nereid, transported beyond the time of Homer, sees Thetis rising from the bosom of the ocean—before she was sensible to the love of any mortal—before her union with Peleus was thought of—before her youthful charms had kindled the passion of the three gods—before even the first ship had cut the waves of the Ægian sea—for the prow on which she rests her foot, is only an attribute to make her known." *

He goes on in this way through several pages. What he did not do well, I cannot hope to do better. Perfection in art, is, indeed, indescribable. All we can learn from the most ingenious description by the man of taste and genius, or the critic of judgment and discernment, is, that the things described must be something very pretty. Such

* Hist. de l'Arte, liv. vii. chap. 7. § 40.

the Thetis certainly is, and I shall say no more of it.

I ought to enumerate to you the sculptures in the smaller casinos, porticos, billiard rooms, *coffee-house*, &c., which, however, are, in general, inferior to those of the great building; but I should vainly try to give you an idea of the treasures of this museum,—of the beautiful statues I have left wholly unmentioned, of the curious mosaics, the ancient paintings, the bronzes, the inscriptions, the marble columns, the vases, the sarcophagi, and the innumerable and inestimable bassi rilievi, which adorn this wonderful temple of art. The hours of pleasure I have spent within it are over. This very day I have visited it for the last time, and its remembrance is all that is left me.

LETTER LXXI.

THE POPE.

To-day we were presented to the Pope in a summer-house of the Vatican gardens, where he went to receive us; for his Holiness may not admit a female within the sanctuary of his palace. Now, to my thinking, his stealing in this private manner into the garden to meet ladies, according to a previous assignation, wears a much more equivocal appearance, and might, indeed, give rise to much scandal.

Five o'clock was the hour fixed for the interview and we had just arrived at the indicated summer-house, which contained two good carpetted drawing-rooms, when, "punctual as lovers to the moment sworn," the Pope entered—took off his large round red hat, and, severally bowing to us both, passed on into the inner room, whither we were conducted by Cardinal ——, and presented. But, alas! here the similitude failed—the natural order of things was reversed—for, instead of the Pope, like an impassioned lover, dropping down on his knees to us, it was our business to kneel to him.

This, however, his holiness, being apprised of our being *Lutherani*, would by no means allow. Instead of his toe, we kissed his hand, which ceremony being performed, he seated us beside him, and chatted with us very pleasantly for half an hour —told us about old times, and old stories, and all he used to do when he was a *Ragazzo*. "Like all other old people," he said, laughing good humouredly, "he thought all things were changed for the worse. The very seasons were changed—opinions were changed—times were changed."—"Tutto e mutato: prima le teste, e poi gli tempi: sopra tutto son mutato io," continued he, laughing; and he drew a very droll picture of what he was when a mischievous little urchin. He was polite enough to choose to think, "it was scarcely possible we could be English, though he had heard so—we spoke Italian so well;" and could hardly believe we had only been a few months in Italy. He said he particularly disliked speaking French—he supposed, because he spoke it particularly ill; but, indeed, he had little reason to like any thing French. Seizing upon this opening, we made some remarks on the occupation of Italy by the French, which drew from him a most energetic picture of the miseries which they had brought upon this unhappy land—of the wrongs they had committed, and the curse they had entailed upon it. "You see it now," he added, "a changed country, exhausted and bleeding under the wounds of its enemies. Their rapacity, not content with despoiling it of its ornaments, has robbed it of its prosperity, and of that

spirit of internal peace and concord, which no time can restore."

He spoke of Venice, his native state, of its flourishing condition before they seized it—of the rapid destruction to which it has ever since been hastening.

I happened to observe, how fortunate it was, that they had been compelled to restore all they had plundered from Rome, (meaning works of art). "All!" he exclaimed—"What! have they restored the blood they have spilt—the wealth they have squandered—the morals they have corrupted? Have they restored the noble families they reduced to beggary—the sons to the mothers they rendered childless—the husband to the widow?"

When venerable age is roused to the energy and emotion we expect only from youth—when the quenched eye lightens, and the hoary locks are shook with the bitter sense of wrongs and regrets, there is something sacred in its feelings, which commands our respect and awe.

This burst of feeling over, he spoke of the French with that mildness of spirit, which is the governing principle of his truly Christian character. "In sorrow more than anger," he seemed to look on the past; and throughout—that indescribable something far stronger than words—in the tone, eye, mind, and gesture, made us feel that it was abhorrence of injustice, violence, oppression, and impiety, and not the sense of personal injury and insult, that moved the virtuous indignation of this venerable old man; whose meekness, patience, and humility,

have through life been his most characteristic qualities.

We retired with his blessing, and an invitation to return again, which we are told is, as well as the length of our interview, very rare. Accordingly, we are much flattered. The honour of having him all to ourselves—for even the Cardinal retired—was, however, I believe, purely accidental. In general, he holds a female levee, and receives all at once. Every body is desired to be dressed up to the throat, and to wear a veil, which is, however, almost always thrown back. Some of our very scrupulous countrywomen have declined presentation to the Pope, because it goes against their consciences to call him *Vostra Santità*. There are certainly some people who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

I forgot to answer one of your queries. You tell me that you hear the Pope is a bigot. I can only tell you, in proof of his liberality, that he permits the English to have regular public worship, according to the rites and service of our own heretical church; and that during three successive winters, we have had a set of rooms openly hired for the express purpose. I cannot exactly say, that he gave his consent; for when it was asked, he rather signified that it might be as well to do it without it.

If the spirit of Martin Luther could look down, he would surely rejoice to see his own tenets and institutions openly practised in the very city, which would have burnt him for holding them.

This toleration of Lutheranism, is, however, an unprecedented circumstance; and some of the cardinals are extremely scandalised with this unhallowed licence, and even pretend ignorance of it. To those to whom I know it is peculiarly obnoxious, I have a mischievous pleasure in introducing the subject, as if by chance; for instance, at the conversazione on Sunday evenings, complaining of the rooms having been too much crowded in the morning during the English service, or lamenting that we were likely soon to lose one of our best preachers, &c. &c.—or remarking, as if in compliment, the liberal policy of the Court of Rome, in now permitting the exercise of our religion, almost as freely as we allow of theirs.

LETTER LXXII.

PROCESSION TO THE MINERVA.—PALM SUNDAY.

ROME is full of pilgrims, who, with their staffs, their scrips, their cockle-shells, their oil-skin tippets, and their large slouch-hats, remind one more of days of yore and tales of romance, than any thing one could have expected to have seen realized in the nineteenth century.

It is also crowded with much less picturesque objects,—carriages full of bewildered *Forestieri*, driving about and seeking for a place wherein to lay their heads, in vain. Every hotel and lodging is full, even to overflowing, with curious heretics: every church is crowded with devout Romans; and every pulpit resounds with the stentorian voice of some Friar, denouncing, with all the vehemence of Italian energy and gesticulation, the horrors of hell, and demonstrating that his congregation are in the fair way to tumble into that fiery abyss. A preacher has not the smallest chance of popularity here, who does not frighten his auditors out of their senses. Even in the open Piazzas, these zealous Friars raise their crucifix, and hold forth to the gaping multitude.

Frequent processions of penitents, covered with long dark robes, which pass over the head and have holes cut for the eyes, girded round the waist with ropes, preceded by a large black cross, and bearing skulls and bones and begging-boxes for the souls in Purgatory, are to be seen passing in silence along the streets, or gliding through the solitude of the Coliseum, or beneath the Triumphal Arches and Ruins of ancient Rome. A party of these mysterious-looking figures that I saw yesterday emerging from the Arch of Titus, and entering the Coliseum, where they knelt in silence and in deep prayer upon its once blood-stained area before the Altars of the Via Crucis, had a very striking effect. All these are forerunners of the holy week, to which immense multitudes still flock from all parts; though *now*, I believe, more from curiosity than piety, and for amusement than penitence. A real penance, however, it has proved to me; and if I were to live in Rome for fifty years, I would never go through it again; though I am glad that I have seen it once—now that it is over. Before the Holy Week, our sufferings began: We were disturbed the very morning of our return from Naples, with the information that it was a grand festa—the Festa of the Annunciation, and that a grand *funzione* was to take place at the Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, preceded by a still more superb procession—and that we must get up to see it, which we accordingly did; and drove through streets lined with expectant crowds, and windows hung with crimson and yellow silk draperies and occupied by females in their

most gorgeous attire, till we made a stop near the church before which the Pope's horse-guards, in their splendid full-dress uniforms, were stationed to keep the ground; all of whom, both officers and men, wore in their caps a sprig of myrtle, as a sign of rejoicing. After waiting a short time, the procession appeared, headed by another detachment of the guards, mounted on prancing black chargers, who rode forward to clear the way, accompanied by such a flourish of trumpets and kettle-drums, that it looked at first like any thing but a peaceable or religious proceeding. This martial array was followed by a bareheaded priest, on a white mule, bearing the Host in a gold cup, at the sight of which every body,—not excepting our coachman who dropped down on the box,—fell upon their knees, and we were left alone, heretically sitting in the open barouche.

The Pope, I understand, used formerly to ride upon the white mule himself; whether in memory of our Saviour's entrance into Jerusalem on an ass or no, I cannot say; and all the Cardinals used to follow him in their magnificent robes of state, mounted either on mules or horses; and as the *Eminentissimi** are, for the most part, not very eminent horsemen, they were generally fastened on, lest they should tumble off. This cavalcade must have been a very entertaining sight. I understand that Pius VI., who was a very handsome man, kept up this custom, but the present Pope is far too infirm

* *Eminentissimo* is the title by which a Cardinal is addressed in conversation.

for such an enterprize; so he followed the man on the white mule, in his state coach; at the very sight of which, we seemed to have made a jump back of two hundred years at least. It was a huge machine, composed almost entirely of plate-glass, fixed in a ponderous carved and gilded frame, through which was distinctly visible the person of the venerable old Pope, dressed in robes of white and silver, and incessantly giving his benediction to the people, by a twirl of three fingers; which are typical of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; the last being represented by the little finger.

On the gilded back of this vehicle, the only part I think that was not made of glass, was a picture of the Pope in his chair of state, and the Virgin Mary *at his feet*. This extraordinary machine was drawn by six black horses, with superb harness of crimson velvet and gold; the coachmen, or rather postillions, were dressed in coats of silver stuff, with crimson velvet breeches, and full bottomed wigs well powdered, without hats.

Three coaches, scarcely less antiquely superb, followed with the assistant Cardinals, and the rest of the train. In the inside of the church, the usual tiresome ceremonies went on that take place when the Pope is present. He is seated on a throne, or chair of state; the Cardinals, in succession, approach and kiss his hand, retire one step, and make three bows or nods, one to him in front, and one on the right hand, and another on the left; which, I am told, are intended for him, (as the personification of the Father,) and for the Son, and for the Holy Ghost, on either side of him; and all the

Cardinals having gone through these motions, and the inferior priests having kissed his toe—that is, the cross embroidered on his shoe—high mass begins. The Pope kneels during the elevation of the Host, prays in silence before the high altar, gets up and sits down, reads something out of a great book which they bring to him with a lighted taper held beside it (which must be eminently useful in the broad day-light;) and, having gone through many more such ceremonies, finally ends as he began, with giving his benediction with three fingers, all the way as he goes out.

During all the time of this high mass, the Pope's military band, stationed on the platform in front of the church, played so many clamorous martial airs, that it would have effectually put to flight any ideas of religious solemnity—if any there had been.

The Pope on this day gives to a certain number of young women, a marriage portion of fifty crowns, or sometimes more. Such of them as choose to become the spouse of heaven, carry it to a convent, in which case it is always a larger sum. We expected to have seen them walk in the procession, but it seems the practice has fallen into disuse, and they did not appear. Formerly, the Pope used to portion from one to two hundred young girls, but now that his finances are reduced, the number is necessarily more limited. We heard contradictory accounts of the numbers portioned to-day; the highest statement was between seventy and eighty.

This exhibition over, we had luckily no more

processions to see till Palm Sunday came, which, at half-past eight o'clock, beheld us seated in the Sistine Chapel, where we waited a full hour before the Pope made his appearance. At last he entered, attired in a robe of scarlet and gold, which he wore over his ordinary dress, and took his throne. The Cardinals, who were at first dressed in under-robes of a violet-colour, (the mourning for Cardinals,) with their rich antique lace, scarlet trains, and mantles of ermine, suddenly got quit of these accoutrements, and arrayed themselves in most splendid vestments, which had the appearance of being made of carved gold. The tedious ceremony of each separately kissing the Pope's hand, and making their three little bows, being gone through; and some little chaunting and fidgetting about the altar being got over; two palm branches, of seven or eight feet in length, were brought to the Pope, who, after raising over them a cloud of incense, bestowed his benediction upon them: Then a great number of smaller palms were brought, and a Cardinal, who acted as the Pope's aid-de-camp on this occasion, presented one of these to every Cardinal as he ascended the steps of the throne, who again kissed the Pope's hand and the palm, and retired. Then came the Archbishops, who kissed both the Pope's hand and toe, followed by the inferior orders of clergy, in regular gradations, who only kissed the toe, as they carried off their palms.

The higher dignitaries being at last provided with palms, the Deacons, Canons, Choristers, Cardinals' train-bearers, &c., had each to receive branches of

olive, to which, as well as to the palms, a small cross was suspended. At last, all were ready to act their parts, and the procession began to move: It began with the lowest in clerical rank, who moved off two by two, rising gradually in dignity, till they came to Prelates, Bishops, Archbishops, and Cardinals, and terminated by the Pope, borne in his chair of state (*sedia gestatoria*) on mens' shoulders, with a crimson canopy over his head. By far the most striking figures in the procession were the Bishops and Patriarchs of the Armenian Church. One of them wore a white crown, and another a crimson crown glittering with jewels. The mitres of the Bishops were also set with precious stones; and their splendid dresses, and long wavy beards of silver whiteness, gave them a most venerable and imposing appearance.

The procession issued forth into the Sala Borgia, (the hall behind the Sistine Chapel,) and marched round it, forming nearly a circle; for by the time the Pope had got out, the leaders of the procession had nearly got back again; but they found the gates of the chapel closed against them, and on admittance being demanded, a voice was heard from within, in deep recitative, seemingly enquiring into their business, or claims for entrance there. This was answered by the choristers from the procession in the hall; and after a chaunted parley of a few minutes, the gates were again opened, and the Pope, Cardinals, and Priests returned to their seats. Then the Passion was chaunted; and then a most tiresome long service commenced, in which the usual genu-

flections, and tinkling of little bells, and dressings, and undressings, and walking up and coming down the steps of the altar, and bustling about, went on; and which at last terminated in the Cardinals all embracing and kissing each other, which is, I am told, the kiss of peace.

You must be nearly as tired with this account of this long *funzione*, as I was of seeing it, and it is quite impossible you can be more so.

The procession would really have been worth seeing, if it had taken place in St Peter's Church instead of this confined little chapel and hall, in which, from the crowding and squeezing, the fine dresses, and palm branches, and all the pomp of the pageant, lost their effect.

The palms are artificial, plaited of straw, or the leaves of dried reeds, so as to resemble the real branches of the palm-tree, when their leaves are plaited, which are used in this manner for this ceremony, in the Catholic colonies of tropical climates. These artificial palms, however, are topped with some of the real leaves of the palm-tree, brought from the shores of the Gulf of Genoa.

LETTER LXXIII.

THE HOLY WEEK—THE MISERERE—HOLY THURSDAY—PROCESSIONS—THE INTERMENT OF CHRIST—SEPULCHRAL ILLUMINATIONS OF THE POLINA CHAPEL—THE WASHING OF FEET—THE SERVING AT TABLE—THE PENITENZA MAGGIORE—THE CROSS OF FIRE—THE ADORATION BY THE POPE AND CARDINALS—THE RELICS—ILLUMINATED SEPULCHRE OF CHRIST AT ST ANTONIO DE PORTOGHESI—CONCERT OF SACRED MUSIC.

We enjoyed three day's relaxation from the toils of the Holy Week; for we did not go to see the body of St Joseph of Arimathea at St Peter's on Tuesday, which we might have done; but on Wednesday evening, in our impatience to secure places for the first Miserere in the Sistine Chapel, we went at three o'clock, and sat waiting nearly an hour and a half, before the service commenced. Even at that hour, however, the gentlemen had difficulty enough in finding standing room, so great was the pressure in the confined space allotted to them. Many were unable to get in from want of room; and many were turned back, from going in

boots or trowsers, instead of silk stockings; for no man may attend this service of religion and penitence, unless he be dressed as if going to a ball; and if he has any description of military uniform, it is highly expedient for him to wear it.

The seats for the ladies are at the lower end of the chapel, where we are caged up behind a gilded grate, like so many wild beasts; being accounted almost as mischievous animals among Popes and Cardinals. We were all dressed according to his Holiness's taste, in black, and with veils; and I am told, we looked like a sisterhood of nuns through the grate.

An elevated place, called the Tribune, appropriated for kings and the princes of royal blood, was occupied by the old ex-King and Queen of Spain, Prince Henry of Prussia, the Queen, and young King of Etruria, the Duke and Duchess of Genoa, the Prince Carignano, the young heir of Turin, and several other sprigs of fresh budding, or blighted, royalty. Behind them sat the foreign ambassadors, all in a row.

When at last the service, which the Italians call the *Mattutino delle Tenebre,* did commence, nothing could exceed my disappointment. It was in no degree superior to the most ordinary chaunt of a Catholic church; and finding nothing in it to occupy me, I amused myself with watching the ill concealed drowsiness of many of the cardinals, who, having just risen from dinner, seemed to have the greatest difficulty in refraining from taking their customary siesta. Though broad day-light, there

was a row of candles of *mourning* wax, (of a dark brown, or purple colour,) ranged upon the top of our grate, the utility of which was not very apparent, as they were extinguished before it grew dark. There were also fifteen similar mourning candles, erected on high beside the altar, which, I was given to understand, represented the Apostles and the three Maries, rising gradually in height to the central one, which was the Virgin. As the service proceeded, they were put out one by one, to typify the falling off of the Apostles in the hour of trial; so that at last they were all extinguished, except the Virgin Mary, who was set under the altar.

The shadows of evening had now closed in, and we should have been left almost in total darkness, but for the dull red glare which proceeded from the hidden lights of the unseen choristers, and which, mingling with the deepening twilight, produced a most melancholy gloom.

After a deep and most impressive pause of silence, the solemn Miserere commenced; and never by mortal ear was heard a strain of such powerful, such heart-moving pathos. The accordant tones of a hundred human voices, and one which seemed more than human—ascended together to heaven for mercy to mankind—for pardon to a guilty and sinning world. It had nothing in it of this earth—nothing that breathed the ordinary feelings of our nature. It seemed as if every sense and power had been concentered into that plaintive expression of lamentation, of deep suffering, and supplication,

which possessed the soul. It was the strain that disembodied spirits might have used who had just passed the boundaries of death, and sought release from the mysterious weight of woe and the tremblings of mortal agony that they had suffered in the passage of the grave. It was the music of another state of being.

It lasted till the shadows of evening fell deeper, and the red dusky glare, as it issued stronger from the concealed recess whence the singing proceeded, shed a partial, but strong light upon the figures near it.

It ceased—a priest with a light moved across the chapel, and carried a book to the officiating cardinal, who read a few words in an awful and impressive tone.

Then, again, the light disappeared, and the last, the most entrancing harmony arose, in a strain that might have moved heaven itself—a deeper, more pathetic sound of lamentation, than mortal voices ever breathed since the expulsion of

Its effect upon the minds of those who heard it, was almost too all-powerful to be borne, and never —never can be forgotten. One gentleman fainted, and was carried out; and many of the ladies near me were in agitation even more distressing, which they vainly struggled to suppress.

It was the music of Allegri; but the composition, however fine, is nothing without the voices which perform it here. It is only the singers of the Papal chapel who can execute the Miserere. They have

been tried by the best singers in Germany, and totally failed of effect.

There is never any accompaniment, though at times the solemn swell of the softened organ seemed to blend with the voices.

This music is more wonderful, and its effect more powerful, than any thing I could have conceived.

At its termination, some loud strokes, that reverberated through the chapel, and are intended, I was told, to represent the Vail of the Temple being rent in twain, closed the service.

With Holy Thursday our miseries began.

On this disastrous day, we went before nine to the Sistine Chapel—saw the Pope enter, after sitting an hour—witnessed the Cardinals' kissing of hands, and priests' kissing of toes, as usual—underwent the same tiresome repetition of mass—and beheld a procession, led by the inferior orders of clergy, followed up by the Cardinals in superb dresses bearing long wax-tapers in their hands, and ending with the Pope himself, who walked beneath a crimson canopy, with his head uncovered, bearing the Host in a box; and this being, as you know, the real flesh and blood of Christ, was carried from the Sistine Chapel, through the intermediate hall, to the Paulina Chapel, where it was deposited in the sepulchre prepared to receive it, beneath the altar. The ceremony of the deposition we did not witness; for the moment the Pope entered, the doors of the chapel were closed.

I never yet could learn, why Christ was to be

buried before he was dead; for, as the crucifixion did not take place till Good Friday, it seems odd to inter him on Thursday. His body, however, is laid in the sepulchre, in all the churches of Rome in which this rite is practised, on Thursday forenoon; and it remains there till Saturday at midday, when, for some reason best known to themselves, he is supposed to rise from the grave, amidst the firing of cannon, and blowing of trumpets, and jingling of bells—which have been carefully tied up ever since the dawn of Holy Thursday, lest the devil should get into them. But I am anticipating. The moment the Pope left the Paulina Chapel, the gates were thrown open. Nothing could exceed the brilliancy of its illumination, which lasted as long as the body lay in the tomb. During these two days and nights, hundreds, clad in deep mourning, were continually kneeling, in silence the most profound and in devotion the most fervent, around the illuminated sepulchre of their crucified Redeemer, over which they wept in anguish of spirit. I have entered it on tiptoe again and again, amidst the most awful silence, and heard no sound but the sigh of penitence.

It was a cruel sight to see these thousands of sepulchral tapers blackening the frescos of Michael Angelo; and yet I don't know how they can reasonably be objected to, since he himself planned their arrangement.

We did not wait for the re-opening of the chapel at present, nor for the benediction the Pope was afterwards to give from the balcony of St Peter's,

knowing it would be repeated on Sunday; but hurried away to endeavour to get places in the Sala della Lavanda, to see the washing of feet.

It was not, however, till after great exertions on the part of the gentlemen of our party, and after being nearly pressed to death in the most terrible squeeze I ever encountered, that we found ourselves in the hall, which was already crowded almost to suffocation; and, completely exhausted, and scarcely half alive, we were placed upon the raised steps reserved for the ladies, exactly opposite to the pilgrims or rather priests, whose feet the Pope was to wash.

The ceremony is instituted in commemoration of our Saviour's washing the feet of the apostles, but here there were thirteen instead of twelve. The odd one is the representative of the angel that once came to the table of twelve that St Gregory was serving; and though it is not asserted that the said angel had his feet washed, or indeed did any thing but eat, yet as the Pope can hardly do less for him than the rest, he shares in the ablution as well as the repast.

The twelve were old priests, but the one who performed the part of the angel, was very young. They were all dressed in loose white gowns, with white caps on their heads, and clean woollen stockings, and were seated in a row along the wall, under a canopy. When the Pope entered and took his seat at the top of the room, the whole company of them knelt in their places, turning towards him; and on his hand being extended in benediction, they all rose again and reseated themselves.

The splendid garments of the Pope were the taken off; and, clad in a white linen robe which he had on under the others, and wearing the bishop's mitre instead of the tiara, he approached the pilgrims, took from an attendant Cardinal a silver bucket of water, knelt before the first of them, immersed one foot in the water, put water over it with his hand, and touched it with a square fringed cloth; kissed the leg, and gave the cloth, and a sort of white flower, or feather, to the man; then went on to the next. The whole ceremony was over, I think, in less than two minutes, so rapidly was this act of humility gone through. From thence the Pope returned to his throne, put on his robes of white and silver again, and proceeded to the Sala di Tavola, whither we followed, not without extreme difficulty, so immense was the crowd. The thirteen Priests were seated in a row at the table, which was spread with a variety of dishes, and adorned with a profusion of flowers. The Pope gave the blessing, and, walking along the side of the table opposite to them, handed each of them bread, then plates, and, lastly, cups of wine. They regularly all rose up to receive what he presented; and the Pope having gone through the forms of service, and given them his parting benediction, left them to finish their dinner in peace. They carry away what they cannot eat, and receive a small present in money besides.

The ceremonies of this morning, which we were nearly pressed to death to obtain a sight of, in my humble opinion, are not in the least worth seeing. Those, on the contrary, which we witnessed in th

evening, were attended with no difficulty, and were, in all respects, highly interesting. I chiefly allude to the divine Miserere in the Sistine Chapel, which was, if possible, finer than that of the preceding day. Before we went up to hear it, (about four o'clock) we stopped at St Peter's, to see the Penitenza Maggiore, a Cardinal, who is armed with powers to give absolution for crimes which no other priest can absolve, and who sits on the evenings of Holy Thursday, and Good Friday, in the great Confessional of St Peter's.

A man was on his knees at confession when we were there, whose face, of course, we could not see. The Cardinal had unceasing employment in touching, with his long white wand, the heads of those who knelt before him for this purpose, and who thereby receive great spiritual benefit. Yesterday he sat at the same hour in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

The effect of the blazing cross of fire suspended from the dome above the confession, or tomb of St Peter's, was strikingly brilliant at night, when, at the conclusion of the Miserere, we descended into the church, whose immense expanse was thoroughly illuminated with its resplendent brightness. It is covered with innumerable lamps, which have the effect of one blaze of fire. Though eighteen feet in length, its proportion to the immensity of St Peter's is so small, that it looked like a minute ornamental cross, such as a lady might wear round her neck; and its diminutiveness disappointed us all. The whole church was thronged with a vast multitude, of all

classes and countries, from royalty to the meanest beggar, all gazing upon this one object.

In a few minutes, the Pope and all the Cardinals descended into St Peter's, and room being kept for them by the Swiss Guards, the aged Pontiff, whose silver hairs shaded his pale and resigned head, prostrated himself in silent adoration before the cross of fire. A long train of Cardinals knelt behind him, whose splendid robes and attendant train-bearers, formed a striking contrast to the humility of their attitude. Three abdicated monarchs knelt beside them,—the aged King of Spain, the poor and blind King of Sardinia, in the simple garb of a Jesuit, and the King of Holland, (Louis Buonaparte,) in the dress of the plainest citizen; the young King of Etruria, too, and his mother Queen,* and many reigning Princes of Germany and Italy bent before the cross. Silence the most profound reigned, while those whom all were bound to worship on earth, knelt before the throne of Heaven. This striking scene has been so beautifully described by Madame de Staël, that I will not attempt to give you any account of it. She justly observes, that as soon as the act of adoration is finished, St Peter's resembles an immense *caffé*, in which the people perambulate, apparently thinking of any thing but religion. The effect of the fiery cross is much diminished by the distracting lights in a little raised gallery on one side of the dome, in which the exposition of the relics was made. These consist-

* Now Archduchess of the once-happy Republic of Lucca.

ed, I think, of a piece of the true cross on which Christ was crucified, incased in gold; a bit of the spear which pierced the side; a morsel of the sponge; and the *volto santo*, as the Italians call it, or "the true image" of the face of our Saviour on Santa Veronica's handkerchief, whose statue, flourishing a marble pocket handkerchief, stands immediately below. Each of these precious relics was brought out successively by a priest, who carried it in his hands, and, followed by two others who carried nothing, walked continually to and fro in the little gallery—much as I have seen a lion exercise himself in his den. Then stopping full in face of the people, he presented it to their view, and at last went out with it at a door which opened upon the gallery, from behind the scenes, and returned with another.

Leaving St Peter's, we drove to St Antonio de' Portoghesi, to see the sepulchre of Christ. The open portal of this small but beautiful church, poured forth one flood of light. The walls, columns, shrines, and lateral chapels, which are entirely formed of the most beautiful polished marbles, reflected like a mirror the blaze of the innumerable tapers with which it was illuminated. The sepulchre, which was in the great altar, was overpoweringly resplendent. The church, though crowded with people, was as silent as the grave; not a whisper—not a footstep was to be heard. All, except ourselves, were prostrate on the ground in silent prayer, and, with light footsteps, we left it as soon and as silently as we could.

This evening we attended a grand Accademia of sacred music, in the house of Signora Corsi, Via de' Coronari. Voices, which almost seemed more than human, sang, in the alternation of recitative, solo, duet, trio, and grand chorus, a succession of the most original, the most solemn, the most astonishing compositions that mortal genius surely ever framed, or mortal ear ever heard. It was music which resembled, in its wonderful pathos and power over the soul, nothing that I could have conceived this world to have produced. Never shall I forget the divine Miserere with which it concluded. It surpassed that which we had heard at the Sistine Chapel, not only in the superiority of the composition, but in having full and extremely fine accompaniments; whereas, at the latter, the music is invariably purely vocal. Out of Rome, no such music is to be heard; but it is in sacred music, and especially in this branch of it, that the Romans excel, or rather they possess it exclusively.

LETTER LXXIV.

GOOD FRIDAY—THE TRE ORE—THE PILGRIMS.

On the morning of Good Friday, we resumed our wearisome labours by going to the Sistine Chapel. About ten o'clock the Pope appeared, and after a long service, the crucifix over the altar, which had been covered up all the week with a violet or purple coloured cloth, (which is the mourning of crosses and cardinals here,) was uncovered. This is called the discovery of the cross; and then, after a great deal of fuss and mummery, it is laid on a napkin on a stand before the altar, and after some chanting, and much loss of time, the Pope comes to it, kneels to it, prays, or seems to pray, over it, and goes away, and all the Cardinals come one by one, and do the same. And this is called the Adoration of the Cross. Then they all set off upon the usual procession to the Paulina Chapel; the only difference being, that the Pope walks without any canopy over him, and uncovered. The doors of the Paulina Chapel were closed upon them, and what they

did there I don't know; only I understand their business was to take up the Host which they had deposited in the sepulchre yesterday. Certain it is, they came back just as they went, except that the Pope wore his mitre. As soon as this was over, without waiting for the long mass which was to follow, I went to the service of the *Tre Ore*, "the three hours of agony" of Christ upon the cross, which lasts from twelve to three.

It is a complete drama, and is performed in several churches. I attended it in S. Andrea delle Fratte, which, before I arrived, was crowded almost to suffocation; but a chair, in a commodious situation, and a soldier to guard it, had been kept for me by the attention of the priests, who had been apprised of my coming.

The upper part of the church was arranged like a theatre, with painted trees, and pasteboard rocks and thickets, representing Mount Calvary. A little way down, two Roman centurions, large as life, dressed in military uniforms, and mounted on pasteboard horses, were flourishing their pasteboard swords. Higher up on the mount, on three crucifixes, were nailed the figures of Christ and the two thieves; so correctly imitating life, or rather death, that I took it for wax-work.

Catholics say, Christ spoke seven times upon the cross,* and at every saying a dagger entered the

* The seven sayings of Christ are as follows:

1st. "Father! forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

heart of the Virgin, who is therefore painted with seven daggers sticking in her breast, and adored as "Nostra Signora de' sette dolori"—Our Lady of the seven sorrows.

The service of the *Tre Ore* is, therefore, divided into seven acts, between each of which there is a hymn. In every act, one of the seven set dissertations, upon the "sette parole" of Christ, is read—or begun to be read—by a priest, who goes on until his lecture is interrupted by the preacher, who breaks in upon it at whatever part he pleases with a sermon (as they call it) or rather a tirade, of his own, which seems to be extempore, but I am told is previously learnt by rote.

A fat Dominican filled the pulpit on this occasion. He opened his seven sermons by a preparatory exhortation, inviting us to come to listen to the last accents of Christ—to witness his dying agonies, &c., in these words:—

"*Venite ad ascoltar gl'ultimi accenti di Gesù. Quanto sia giusta cosa e dovuta, che i Cristiani accompagnino il lor' Redentore in queste ore tenerissime dell' agonia*, &c."

2d. (To the good thief.) "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

3d. (To the Virgin Mary,) "Woman! behold thy son!"
(and to the Apostle John.) "Son! behold thy mother!"

4th. "My God! my God! why hast thou abandoned me!"

5th. "I thirst." (*Sitio.*)

6th. "It is finished." (*Consummatum est.*)

7th. "Father! into thy hands I commend my spirit!"

Then he said it was our ingratitude which caused him these tremendous agonies.

" *Guardatelo bene O Anime!* (a term of great abuse,) *E la vostra ingratitudine che gli cagiona quelle tremende agonie di morte.* * *Guardelo bene su quella croce; tutto da capo a piedi fatto una piaga, le spalle e tutto il corpo, lacerato dai flagelli, il petto snervato dalle percosse, il capo trapassato orribilmente dalle spine, i capelli strappati, la barba schintata, il volto ferito dalle guanciate, le vene vuote di sangue, la bocca inaridata dalla sete, la lingua amareggiata dal fiele e dall' accto, le mani e piedi trivellati e trafitti da fieri chiodi e questi squarcj inaspriti anche più dal peso del suo medesimo corpo,*" &c. &c. &c.

Then he burst forth into a string of apostrophes to Christ on the cross, being an incessant repetition of interjections and vocatives, interlarded with a few metaphors, most of which I hold to be perfectly untranslateable. The following, which I took down verbatim from his mouth, were uttered without the smallest interruption or pause.—" *O mio Gesù! O Gesù amorosissimo! O Fratello Gesù!*

* Look at him upon that cross—from head to foot one entire wound—his shoulders, and all his body lacerated with scourges, his breast bruised with blows, his head torn cruelly with thorns, his hair pulled away by the roots, his beard savagely plucked out, his face battered with blows, his veins devoid of blood, his mouth dried up with thirst, his tongue embittered with gall and vinegar, his feet and hands wrenched round and transfixed with strong nails, and the torture of his broken legs aggravated by the weight of his body, &c. &c.

Fratello amorosissimo! O Gesù del miocuore! O amalatissimo mio Gesù! O Gesù afflitto! O Gesù coronato da spine! O Gesù caro! O Gesù mio! O Gesù dolcissimo! O Gesù dolorosissimo! O Gesù benignissimo! O amantissimo nostro Gesù! il cui incendio amoroso non poterono estinguere le acque di tanta crudeltà e tribulazione!" That is to say, "O my Jesus! O most beloved Jesus! O brother Jesus! Most beloved brother! O Jesus of my heart! O most suffering Jesus! O Jesus afflicted! O Jesus crowned with thorns! O dear Jesus! O my Jesus! O most sweet Jesus! O most sorrowful Jesus! O most benign Jesus! O, our most beloved Jesus! whose burning love, the waters of so much cruelty and tribulation could not extinguish!"

Then he reviled us all, under every sort of vituperative epithet, (in which *Mundani! Anime! Peccatori insensibili! Peccatori vil'e sporcissimi!* were the best that fell to our share,) and reproached us bitterly because we did not die with grief at the sight of the sufferings of our Redeemer, as the *Martiri*, *Confessori*, and *Penitenti* of old had done. "*Che morirono per impulso d'un fervido vostro amore. D'un amore inesplicabile morì Maria vostra Madre, d'un amore vivissimo morì la cara vostra Maddalena e la vostra Sposa Caterina. Moriam dunque Anime! Moriam d'amore!*"* How-

* Who died through the impulse of a fervid love for you, (Christ,) of an inexplicable love died Mary, your mother; of a most lively love died your dear Magdalen; and your wife Catherine (of Siena.) Let us die then, wretches as we are! Let us die of love.

ever, we did not die, and he reviled us worse than ever. "*La vostra anima l'ascolta e si rimane insensibile, cieca, sorda, e muta. Vede morire il suo Dio, e non sospira, non piange! Perche non muoja quando muore egli?*"* &c. &c.

Nay, he once called us stones, (*pietre!*) and not only abused men, but angels—not only earth, but heaven—which, under the name of "*Ingrato Cielo!*" he reproached with being unworthy of him, and adjured to prize him as it ought.

When he reviled us for disobedience to the ordinances of the Holy Church, through the gates of which, he said, were the only paths to salvation, and depicted to us the flames of hell, in which, he informed us, we should be consumed if we did not implicitly follow her commands; and more than all—when I heard him abuse us for not sufficiently mortifying the flesh, and looked on his own surprising fatness—I own I could not restrain a smile.

During his last discourse, which, in vehement emphasis, ejaculation, and gesticulation, far exceeded the six preceding ones, he continually importuned Christ for one sign, one look—"*Da mi uno sguardo!*" &c. &c., then he said he had given him one look full of mercy—("*uno sguardo pieno di carità!*")—and he asked for another—"*uno sguardo ancora, un' altro sguardo—O Gesù mio!*" &c. &c. At length the discourse was drawn out to the right

* Your souls remain insensible, blind, deaf, and dumb. You see your God die, and do not sigh nor weep. Why don't you die when he dies, &c.

instant of time—the three hours were expiring—. "*Ecco il momento!*" he cried, and every body sunk prostrate on the ground in tears; and sobs, and groans, and cries, and one loud burst of agony filled the church—"*Ecco il momento! Già spira Gesù Cristo!—Già muore il nostro Redentore!—Già finisce di vivere il nostro Padre!*"*

I believe mine was almost the only dry eye in the church, excepting the priest's. The sobs of the soldier, who leaned on his firelock behind my chair, made me look round, and I saw the big tears rolling down his rugged cheeks.

From this time I took no more notes, and therefore will not pretend to give you any more quotations from the good father's discourse, which went on with a vehemence both of words and action, that certainly seemed eloquence of a kind well calculated to answer the effect he intended, that of moving the passions of those to whom it was addressed.

At length the preacher cried, "Here they come—the holy men—to bear the body of our Redeemer to the sepulchre;" and from the side of the scene issued forth a band of friars, clad in black, with white scarfs tied across them, and gradually climbing Mount Calvary by a winding path amongst the rocks and bushes, reached the foot of the cross, unmolested by the paper centurions. But when they begun to unnail the body, it is utterly impos-

* The moment is come, now Jesus Christ expires! Now our Redeemer dies! Now our Father ceases to live!

sible to describe the shrieks, and cries, and clamours of grief, that burst from the people. At the unloosening of every nail, they were renewed with fresh vehemence, and the sobs and tears of the men were almost as copious as those of the women.

Five prayers, separately addressed to the five wounds of Christ—first, the wound in the left foot, then that of the right foot, and so of the two hands, and, lastly, of the side, were next repeated. They were nearly the same, and all began, "*Vi adoro, piaga Santissima*—(I adore you, most holy wound.")

The body of Christ being laid on a bier, decked with artificial flowers, and covered with a transparent veil, was brought down Mount Calvary by the holy men,—as the preacher called them,—who deposited it on the front of the stage, where all the people thronged to kiss the toe through the veil, and weep over it. I was conducted round to it, along with some Italian ladies of my acquaintance, through a private passage, by one of the civil priests, and so escaped the crowd. Upon close inspection, I found that the body was made of pasteboard, extremely well painted for effect; it had real hair on the head, and it was so well executed, that even when closely viewed, it was marked with the agony of nature, and seemed to have recently expired.

The congregation consisted of all ranks, from the prince to the beggar, but there was a preponderance of the higher classes. Some ladies, of the

first rank in Rome were beside me, and they were in agitation the most excessive.

You may depend upon the accuracy of the quotations I have given you from the sermons; and they may enable you to form some idea of the strain of pulpit oratory here. I took them down from the preacher's mouth, while I seemed to be deeply occupied with the book of the service, and I believe my employment was undiscovered, except by the soldier at my back.

After the last Miserere of the week at the Sistine Chapel this evening, which I thought scarcely equal to that of yesterday, we stopped in St Peter's only to give a last glance to the cross of fire; and without waiting for its second adoration by the Pope and Cardinals, we drove to the Hospital of the *Trinità de Pellegrini*, where poor pilgrims of all nations are gratuitously lodged and fed during three days at this period—in order to see some of the Cardinals and Roman Princes washing the feet of the male pilgrims, and Italian ladies of the highest rank doing the same office to the female pilgrims, and afterwards serving them at supper.

This is a voluntary act—but it is always publicly done by a great number of noble Romans of both sexes in Rome, on the evenings of Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

They did not, like the Pope, merely go through the form of it with one foot, but really and truly washed and scrubbed both feet, and afterwards waited upon them, like servants, at supper. Females are not allowed to enter the apartments,

where the male pilgrims lodge; but we wanted to see what the old Cardinals were about, and got permission from Cardinal R—— to enter, and found them all on their knees, scrubbing away in good earnest, as were the Roman *Principesse* above stairs.

A friend of ours this evening attended an exercise of a different sort, at a small church or oratorio, the name of which I have forgot, but belonging, I think, to the P. P. Caravita. Almost all present were clad as penitents, their whole figures—even their heads and faces—completely covered with coarse dark cloth, and holes cut for their eyes. The doors of the church were shut, and after a suitable exhortation from a friar, scourges were distributed, the lights were extinguished, and in total darkness the flagellation began, which continued for twenty minutes,—while a dismal sort of chanted music, like the wailings of suffering souls, was sung. The candles were then relighted, and all departed in peace.

The shops of all the cheese-mongers, sausage-dealers, &c., are to-night most brilliantly illuminated. It is the general custom they say, but I cannot learn the reason. Good-night.

LETTER LXXV.

SATURDAY—BAPTISM OF THE JEWS—AN ORDINATION—THE RESURRECTION—BLESSING THE HOUSES—CONFESSION AND COMMUNION.

We were silly enough to get up this morning before six o'clock, to see some Jews baptized at St John's Lateran. A couple of these unfortunate Israelites, and sometimes more, are always procured on this day, every year, for this purpose. Turks are preferred when they are to be had, but they are rare. The Jews, I understand, are at present very dear,—no less weighty arguments than eighty Roman crowns each, I heard, were necessary to convince these new proselytes of the truth of Christianity. Besides these golden reasons, a Jew no sooner sees the error of his ways, than his debts towards his brother Jews are cancelled; so that, as soon as he becomes a Christian, he is at liberty to be a rogue. Considering this, it really says a great deal for them that there are so few converts.

The two devoted Israelites prepared for this occasion, attired in dirty yellow silk gowns, were seated on a bench within the marble font of the Baptistry, which resembles a large bath, both in form and shape, conning their prayers out of a book, with most rueful visages. Fast to their sides stuck their destined godfathers, two black-robed doctors of divinity, as if to guard and secure their spiritual captives. The ancient vase at the bottom of the font, in which, according to an absurd legend, Constantine was healed of his leprosy by St Sylvester, stood before them filled with water, and its margin adorned with flowers.

The Cardinal Bishop, who had been employed ever since six o'clock in the benediction of fire, water, oil, wax, and flowers; now appeared, followed by a long procession of priests and crucifixes. He descended into the font, repeated a great many prayers in Latin over the water, occasionally dipping his hand into it. Then a huge flaming wax taper, about six feet high, and of proportionate thickness, painted with images of the Virgin and Christ, which had previously been blessed, was set upright in the vase; more Latin prayers were mumbled—one of the Jews was brought, the Bishop cut the sign of the cross in the hair, at the crown of his head, then, with a silver ladle, poured some of the water upon the part, baptizing him in the usual forms, both the godfathers and he having agreed to all that was required of them. The second Jew was brought, upon whom the same ceremonies were performed; this poor little fellow wore

a wig, and when the cold water was poured on his bare skull, he winced exceedingly, and made many wry faces. They were then conveyed to the altar of the neighbouring chapel, where they were confirmed, and repeated the Creed. The Bishop then made the sign of the cross upon their foreheads, with holy oil, over which white fillets were immediately tied to secure it. Then the Bishop addressed a long exhortation to them, in the course of which he told them, that having now abjured their "*ridicola superstizione*," and embraced the true faith, unless they continued in their hearts good Christians, without wavering, they would bring upon themselves greater damnation, and be thrown into the lowest pit of hell fire; nay, if they ever entertained a single Jewish thought,—or felt the least hankering after their former abominable idolatries, —(there, I think, the Jews might have retorted the charge,)—nothing could save them from this doom. He frightened them so, that the little Jew with a wig began to cry most bitterly, and would not be comforted. This being over, the Jews were conducted with great ceremony from the Baptistry to the door of the church, where they stopped, and it was not till after much chanting by the Bishop that it seemed settled they should pass the threshold. Accordingly this was effected, and they were seated within the very pale of the altar, where they had to witness such a tedious succession of foolish ceremonies, that I marvel much they did not repent them of their conversion. It was an ordination of priests of all kinds and degrees, which

lasted nearly five hours; and though we had nothing to do with it, deluded by the fallacious promise of some fine music, which never came, we were foolish enough to stay till the end. The Bishop, being disrobed and his golden mitre exchanged for one set with precious stones, in his linen tunic threw himself prostrate on the steps of the altar, with his face and arms extended on the ground; and all the priests who were to be ordained fell flat on the floor behind him in the same posture. In about a minute the Bishop got up, said a few unintelligible words, and threw himself down again. Then up they all got, and after much fidgetting up and down, and moving about, and chanting in their usual drawl, the Bishop took a pair of scissars, invested several little boys with the tonsure, by cutting a round piece of hair out of the crowns of their heads, and then, after much ado, he put the little white shirts over their heads, and made priestlings of them. Poor little things, some of them did not seem to be more than ten years old. I was glad to hear they might, after this, leave the priesthood if they chose it. Then a batch of deacons (irrevocable priests) were ordained, but these cannot yet perform high mass, nor give extreme unction nor absolution, nor perform any of those higher functions of the church. It was a terrible time before their dressing was completed. Then a number of deacons were created priests, and their fore-finger and thumb were anointed with holy oil, that they might elevate the Host; and between every time of using this holy oil, the Bi-

shop always rubbed his hands with lemon. But mortal patience would fail under the recital of the endless little wearisome ceremonies that were gone through, the dressings and undressings, the pulling off and putting on of mitres and robes, the gettings up and sittings down, the bowings and scrapings, the hair-cuttings, the anointings, the chantings, and the mummery of all kinds that filled up these five mis-spent hours.

At twelve o'clock we left the church along with the Cardinal Bishop, whose ordination ended in carrying out the cup, followed by all the new-made priests and priestlings. At the same moment the resurrection was announced by much "tintinnabular uproar," as a witty friend of ours called it; and certainly the larum was astounding. The bells of every church in Rome, (and there are upwards of three hundred,) began to jingle at once; the cannon from the Castle of St Angelo to fire; and at the Church of Santa Maria Egyziaca, the blowing of horns and trumpets, the clang of kettle-drums, and every species of tumult, proclaimed this sacred event to the world.

During the days in which the bells are tied up, —from Holy Thursday to Saturday at noon,—the hours on which they are usually rung for prayers, viz. six in the morning, three in the afternoon, and the Ave-Maria, which is immediately after sunset, are announced by a little wooden machine, called *tric-trac*, making a sound similar to its name, but very noisy, with which some of the inferior clergy run about the churches at the proper times.

Though the resurrection takes place on Saturday at noon, the fast is not over till midnight, at which time most good Catholics eat *gras*,—that is, an enormous supper of fish, flesh, and fowl. A total abstinence from food, during the two previous days, is still practised by many, but the feasting is now more universal than the fasting.

The priests are very actively employed at Easter in running in and out of every house, blessing it with holy water. I could not think what one of them was about whom I encountered on the stairs, dabbling away with a little brush; when explained, I found the rest of the house had been sprinkled,—but that the Conté, our noble landlord, had not ventured to introduce the holy water into our *appartamento*, thinking such an ablution would not be at all to our heretical taste; but I begged the good father to return and besprinkle them to his full satisfaction, assuring him I should be sorry to deprive the rooms of such an advantage, at which, and the sight of a piece of money, he laughed most heartily.

Every Italian must at this time confess and receive the communion. A friend of ours, who has lived a great deal in foreign countries, and there imbibed very heterodox notions, and who has never to us made any secret of his confirmed uncatholicism, went to-day to confession with the strongest repugnance.

"What can I do?" he said. "If I neglect it, I am reprimanded by the parish priest; if I delay it, my name is posted up in the parish church; if

I persist in my contumacy, the arm of the church will overtake me, and my rank and fortune only serve to make me more obnoxious to its power. If I chose to make myself a martyr to infidelity, as the saints of old did to religion, and to suffer the extremity of punishment in the loss of property and personal rights, what is to become of my wife and family? The same ruin would overtake them though they are Catholics; for I am obliged not only to conceal my true belief, and profess what I despise, but I must bring up my children in their abominable idolatries and superstition; or, if I teach them the truth, make them either hypocrites or beggars." I shall not enter into the soundness of my friend's arguments, or defend the rectitude of his conduct, but certainly the alternative is a hard one; and I believe there are thousands whose virtue would not be proof against it: for this reason, he would not live a day in Italy if he could live out of it, which is not in his power.

LETTER LXXVI.

EASTER SUNDAY—THE BENEDICTION.

THE grandest Catholic festival of the year is Easter Sunday, which was doubly welcome to us, because the last of the holy shows of this exhausting season. On this day the church puts forth all her pomp and splendour. The Pope assists at high mass, or, as the priests have it,—*il sommo Pontefice canta Messa solennemente in S. Pietro*—and there is a procession, which, seen to the highest advantage in that noble church, is as grand as any such procession can be. A *pen* was erected for us ladies in the left of the high altar, for wherever the Pope comes we are always cooped up, for fear of accidents. Luckily, however, it was unprovided with a grate, so that we could see to perfection. It was, in all respects, a happy liberation from the gloomy imprisonment we had been sustaining, day after day, in the Sistine Chapel. The sable robes of the past week were universally thrown aside,

and the gayer,—the more catholically orthodox,—were we.

The church was lined with the Guarda Nobili, in their splendid uniforms of gold and scarlet and nodding plumes of white ostrich feathers, and the Swiss guards, with their polished cuirasses and steel helmets. The great centre aisle was kept clear by a double wall of armed men, for the grand procession, the approach of which, after much expectation, was proclaimed by the sound of a trumpet, from the further end of the church. A long band of priests advanced, loaded with still augmenting magnificence, as they ascended to the higher orders. Cloth of gold, and embroidery of gold and silver, and crimson velvet, and mantles of spotted ermine, and flowing trains, and attendant train-bearers, and mitres and crucifixes glittering with jewels, and priests and patriarchs, and bishops and cardinals, dazzled our astonished eyes, and filled the long length of St Peter's. Lastly, came the Pope, in his crimson chair of state (*sedia gestatoria,*) borne on the shoulders of twenty *Palefrenieri,* arrayed in robes of white, and wearing the tiara, or triple crown of the conjoined Trinity, with a canopy of cloth of silver floating over his head; and preceded by two men, carrying enormous fans, composed of large plumes of ostrich feathers, mounted on long gilded wands. He stopped to pay his adorations to the miraculous Madonna in her chapel, about half way up; and this duty, which he never omits, being performed, he was

slowly borne past the High Altar, liberally giving his benediction with the twirl of the three fingers as he passed.

They set him down upon a magnificent stool, in front of the altar, on which he knelt, and his crown being taken off, and the Cardinals taking off their little red skull caps, and all kneeling in a row, he was supposed to pray. Having remained a few minutes in this attitude, they took him to the chair prepared for him, on the right of the throne. There he read, or seemed to read, something out of a book, for it was impossible that without his spectacles he could really make it out; and then he was again taken to the altar, on which his tiara was placed; and bare-headed, he repeated—or, as by courtesy, they call it, sang—a small part of the service, threw up clouds of incense, and was removed to the crimson canopied throne; and High Mass was celebrated by a Cardinal and two Bishops, at which he assisted, that is, he got up and sat down in particular parts.

During the whole service, I could not help observing that the only part of the congregation who were in the least attentive, were the small body of English, whom curiosity, and perhaps sense of decorum, rendered so. All the Italians seemed to consider it quite as much of a pageant as ourselves, but neither a new nor an interesting one; and they were walking about, and talking, and interchanging pinches of snuff with each other, exactly as if it had been a place of amusement,—till the tink-

ling of a little bell, which announced the elevation of the Host, changed the scene. Every knee was now bent to the earth, every voice was hushed, the reversed arms of the military rung with an instantaneous clang on the marble pavement, as they sunk on the ground, and all was still as death. This did not last above two minutes. The Host was swallowed, and so begun and ended the only thing that bore even the smallest outward aspect of religion.

They brought the Pope, however, again to the footstool to pray. Two Cardinals always support him, some priestly attendants bear up his train, and others busy themselves about his drapery, while two or three others put on and off his tiara and mitre; and so conduct him to and fro, between the altar and throne, where he sits at the top of this magnificent temple, exactly like an idol dressed up to be worshipped. The long silver robes, the pale, dead, inanimate countenance, and helpless appearance of the good old man, tend still more to give him the air of a thing without any will of its own, but which is carried about, and set in motion, and managed by the priests, and taught by them to make certain movements.

At last they put him again into the chair, set the crown upon his head, and, preceded by the great ostrich feather fans, he was borne out of the church.

We made all possible expedition up to the Loggia,—a temporary sort of gallery erected on the top of the colonnade, opposite to that occupied by the royal families,—and secured places in the front row.

An expecting crowd had long covered the broad expanded steps and platform of the church, and spread itself over the piazza.

The military now poured out of St Peter's, and formed an immense ring before its spacious front, behind which the horse guards were drawn up; and an immense number of carriages, filled with splendidly dressed women, and thousands of people on foot, were assembled. But the multitude almost shrunk into insignificance in the vast area of the piazza; and neither piety, curiosity, nor even that all universal gregarious passion that makes people crowd wherever there is a crowd, had collected together sufficient numbers to fill it.

The tops of the colonnades all round were, however, thronged with spectators; and it was a curious sight to see such a mixture of all ranks and nations,—from the coronetted heads of kings to the poor cripple who crawled along the pavement,—assembled together to await the blessing of an old man, their fellow mortal, now tottering on the brink of the grave.

Not the least picturesque figures among the throng, were the *Contadini*, who, in every variety of curious costume, had flocked in from their distant mountain villages, to receive the blessing of the Holy Father, and whose bright and eager countenances, shaded by their long dark hair, were turned to the balcony where the Pope was to appear. At length the two white ostrich feather-fans, the forerunners of his approach, were seen; and he was borne forward on his throne, above the

shoulders of the Cardinals and Bishops, who filled the balcony. After an audible prayer he arose, and elevating his hands to heaven, invoked a solemn benediction upon the assembled multitude, and the people committed to his charge. Every head was uncovered, the soldiers, and many of the spectators sunk on their knees on the pavement to receive the blessing. That blessing was given with impressive solemnity, but with little of gesture or parade. Immediately the thundering of cannon from the Castle St Angelo, and the peal of bells from St Peter's, proclaimed the joyful tidings to the skies. The Pope was borne out, and the people rose from their knees. But at least one half of them had never knelt at all, which greatly diminished the impressive effect of the whole. There is something in the simultaneous expression of one universal feeling among a multitude, especially if that feeling partake of rejoicing, enthusiasm, devotion, or any generous passion, that is affecting and sublime in the highest degree; but if it be only partially diffused, its effect is utterly lost. I forgot to say, that, after the benediction, several papers were thrown down by one of the Cardinals, which contained, I understand, the indulgences granted to the different churches, and a most pious scuffle ensued among the people to catch them.

The Pope's benediction this day, the Italians say, extends all over the world, but on Thursday it only goes to the gates of Rome.

On Thursday, too, previous to the benediction, one of the Cardinals curses all Jews, Turks, and

heretics, " by bell, book, and candle." The little bell is rung, the curse is sung from the book, and the lighted taper thrown down amongst the people. The Pope's benediction immediately follows upon all true believers.

LETTER LXXVII.

ILLUMINATION OF ST PETER'S, AND FIRE-WORKS FROM THE CASTLE SAN ANGELO.

Easter Sunday, 1818, 12 *at night.*

We have just witnessed one of the most brilliant spectacles in the world—the illumination of St Peter's; and the girandola, or fire-works, from the Castle St Angelo. In general, they are now only given at the anniversary of the Festival of St Peter, which falls in the middle of summer, when Rome is deserted by every stranger, and by all the inhabitants who can escape; but this year, the old custom of exhibiting them on the evening of Easter Sunday, has been revived, in compliment to the Prince Royal of Bavaria, who has been here several months; and it is only one of the many pleasures his residence at Rome has yielded to those who have enjoyed the advantage of his acquaintance.

At Ave Maria we drove to the Piazza of St Peter's. The lighting of the lanternoni, or large paper lanterns, each of which looks like a globe of ethereal fire, had been going on for an hour, and by the time we arrived there, was nearly completed. As we passed the Ponte San Angelo, the

appearance of this magnificent church, glowing in its own brightness—the millions of lights reflected in the calm waters of the Tiber, and mingling with the last golden glow of evening, so as to make the whole building seem covered with burnished gold, had a most striking and magical effect.

Our progress was slow, being much impeded by the long line of carriages before us; but at length we arrived at the Piazza of St Peter's, and took our station on the right of its farther extremity, so as to lose the deformity of the dark dingy Vatican Palace. The gathering shades of night rendered the illumination every moment more brilliant. The whole of this immense church—its columns, capitals, cornices, and pediments—the beautiful swell of the lofty dome, towering into heaven, the ribs converging into one point at top, surmounted by the lantern of the church, and crowned by the cross,—all were designed in lines of fire; and the vast sweep of the circling colonnades, in every rib, line, mould, cornice, and column, were resplendent in the same beautiful light.

While we were gazing upon it, suddenly a bell chimed. On the cross of fire, at the top, waved a brilliant light, as if wielded by some celestial hand, and instantly ten thousand globes and stars of vivid fire seemed to roll spontaneously along the building as if by magic; and self-kindled, it blazed in a moment into one dazzling flood of glory. Fancy herself, in her most sportive mood, could scarcely have conceived so wonderful a spectacle as the instantaneous illumination of this magnificent fabric. The agents by whom it was effected

were unseen, and it seemed the work of enchantment.

In the first instance, the illuminations had appeared to be complete, and one could not dream that thousands, and tens of thousands of lamps were still to be illumined. Their vivid blaze harmonized beautifully with the softer milder light of the lanternoni. The brilliant glow of the whole illumination shed a rosy light upon the fountains, whose silver fall, and ever-playing showers, accorded well with the magic of the scene.

Viewed from the Trinità de' Monti, its effect was unspeakably beautiful: It seemed to be an enchanted palace hung in air, and called up by the wand of some invisible spirit. We did not, however, drive to the Trinità de' Monti, till after the exhibition of the girondola, or great fire-works from the Castle of St Angelo, which commenced by a tremendous explosion, that represented the raging eruption of a volcano. Red sheets of fire seemed to blaze upwards into the glowing heavens, and then to pour down their liquid streams upon the earth. This was followed by an incessant and complicated display of every varied device that imagination could figure—one changing into another, and the beauty of the first effaced by that of the last. Hundreds of immense wheels turned round with a velocity that almost seemed as if demons were whirling them, letting fall thousands of hissing dragons and scorpions and fiery snakes, whose long convolutions darting forward as far as the eye could reach in every direction, at length

vanished into air. Fountains and jets of fire threw up their blazing cascades into the skies. The whole vault of heaven shone with the vivid fires, and seemed to receive into itself innumerable stars and suns, which, shooting up into it in brightness almost insufferable, — vanished — like earth-born hopes.

The reflection in the depth of the calm clear waters of the Tiber was scarcely less beautiful than the spectacle itself; and the whole ended in a tremendous burst of fire, that, while it lasted, almost seemed to threaten conflagration to the world.

But this great agent of destruction was here wholly innocuous. Man, who walks the earth, ruling not only the whole order of beings, but the very elements themselves, had turned that seemingly uncontroulable power, which might annihilate the very globe itself, into a play-thing for his amusement, and compelled it to assume every whimsical and fantastic form that his fancy dictated. It alone, of all things in existence,—reversing the order of nature,—rises from earth towards the skies; yet even this he has bowed to his will. Wonderful as these fire-works were,—and let not that name lead you to imagine they bore any resemblance to those puny exhibitions of squibs and crackers which we denominate fire-works in England, for nothing could be more different,—wonderful as they were, the illumination of St Peter's far surpassed them. It is a spectacle which, unlike other sights that are seen and forgotten, leaves a strong and indelible impression upon the mind.

The expence of the illumination of St Peter's, and of the girandola, when repeated two successive evenings, as they invariably are at the festival of St Peter, is 1000 crowns; when only exhibited one night, they cost 700. Eighty men were employed in the instantaneous illuminations of the lamps, which to us seemed the work of enchantment. They were so posted as to be unseen.

I have now been in Rome during a second Holy Week, and have enjoyed the immunity I dearly earned last year from all its shows and fatigues.

The three Miserere in the Sistine Chapel—the exhibition of the cross of fire in St Peter's, and the Pope's benediction, from the balcony of the church, are all that I have attended, and all that I should attend, if I were to live fifty years in Rome. The procession into St Peter's, and the high mass on Easter Sunday, or on Christmas day—for they are exactly the same—are, however, very well worth seeing once, but once will suffice.

Excepting this, none of the ceremonies at Christmas in the Church of Rome are worth seeing at all, and indeed there are very few to see. On Christmas Eve, a mass is said in the Sistine Chapel, if the Pope be at the Vatican Palace,—or at the Quirinal Chapel, if he be at the Quirinal Palace,—which lasts till midnight. But there are no ceremonies whatever to see—no music whatever to hear; the Pope himself never attends it, and the Cardinals who do, like the rest of the congregation, are more than half asleep.

Yet most strangers go to it, and all repent of so

doing. From thence they generally proceed to some church where there is music, which is rarely worth hearing; and at four in the morning they adjourn to Santa Maria Maggiore, where the grand vigil of Christmas Eve is held; and after sitting out a most wearisome mass, they are at last rewarded with the sight of the new-born Christ, carried about dressed in magnificent swadling-clothes, for the devotion and delight of the people.

I once went through this ceremony, and never repented any other act of folly so much; indeed, it is wholly without an object, for the same doll, which represents the infant Saviour of the world, may be seen at any hour you please, either before or after its birth, and I cannot understand the advantage of looking at it just when one should be in bed.

This vigil of Christmas Eve was formerly really held on the eve; it began before midnight, and lasted till three or four in the morning; but such scenes of indecorous gaiety and intrigue went on on this occasion in the church itself, that the hours were altered.

LETTER LXXVIII.

CONVENTS—TAKING THE VEIL.

THE re-institution of the Inquisition, of the Jesuits, and of Monastic orders in the nineteenth century, is a retrograde step in the progress of society.

The French suppressed all convents of men, without exception. They seized upon their revenues, took possession of their ancient habitations, invested as many of their tonsured heads with the military cap and feather as could be made to submit to it, and shipped off those who refused to renounce their vows, to imprisonment in Corsica or Sardinia. That the poor and the old, who had passed their lives within the peaceful cloister, and given to their convent the little stipend that was to secure support to their latter years, must have suffered severely when thus deprived of all, there can be no doubt. But these excepted, I own that for the whole race of monks and friars, "Black, White, and Gray, with all their trumpery," I feel little compassion. In the same

summary manner, all the nunneries in Rome, excepting two, were suppressed, and however wise might have been their gradual abolition, the propriety of turning out at once so many secluded, and, in many cases, destitute and harmless females, may be doubted. Of the consequences of this step, judging of them, as I must do from hearsay only, I will not venture to speak. But since they had been suppressed, and all those evil consequences once incurred, I cannot but lament that they should have been again restored, at least in such numbers; and, above all, that convents of men, which I look upon to be nests of vice, hypocrisy, ignorance, and abomination, and which, for the most part, are filled with young sturdy beggars, should have been re-established at all. The exact number of convents, and still more of their inmates, it is difficult to ascertain; but all allow that the friars considerably out-number the nuns. With the assistance of one or two Abati, I counted upwards of fifty convents for men, and five-and-thirty for women, in Rome and the immediate vicinity, and probably we left many unreckoned.

I have visited many of the nunneries, and one or two of the convents in Rome; for *uno Convento*, always means here a monastic community of men, and a *Monasterio*, of women; but as the interior of one much resembles another, and as there is nothing particularly interesting about any of them, I shall only give you a short account of my visit to that of S. Sylvestro *in Capite*, originally founded for the noble sisters of the house of Colonna, who

dedicated themselves to God. None but the daughters of noble families are admitted here; and yet, in this living grave, where rank, riches, youth, beauty, and genius, are all buried in equal nothingness, and where all but the mere animal powers are extinguished—what can it signify with what titles they were once adorned?

The Convent of St Sylvestro[a] stands in the Campo Marzo, in one of the best situations of modern Rome. It is an immense building, three stories high, in the form of a quadrangle, inclosing a small garden in the centre, which, from being so inclosed, is neither blest with much light nor air. Here, however, alone the nuns can enjoy "these common gifts of heaven;" for unlike the monks and friars, who may roam about the town and country, they may never cross the threshold of their prison-house. Yet these nuns are of the Franciscan order, the mildest of all. They are allowed to see all their near relations at the grate, and even occasionally to receive the females in the parlour of the convent. They are not obliged to rise to nocturnal prayer, or to practise fasts and penances of peculiar austerity. The privilege of speech is not denied them; nor is the use of linen forbidden; in order that the dirt of the body may serve for the purification of the soul.

About forty nuns, with about half the number

[a] In the year 1318. Vide Gibbon's Decline and Fall, vol. xii. chap. 70. p. 314.

of lay sisters, or servants, occupy this spacious monastery, which would contain more than a hundred; indeed, during the whole time the French were in Rome, it received a community of expelled nuns of the Capuchin order, who voluntarily continued to practise all its austerities, though living with the Franciscans of San Sylvestro. None of either sisterhood left their order, though all, at that time, were at liberty to do so.

The Superior, a fine-looking woman, conducted us through the convent, and seemed much gratified and amused with our visit. She is now near fifty, and had herself taken the vows at the age of twenty, not only voluntarily, but in opposition to the wishes of her parents, and assured us she had never repented it. When asked why she had chosen, at that age, to leave her family, and renounce the world? she replied, "Because God called me!"—(*Perché Dio mi chiamo.*)

The convent contains nothing remarkable. There is a large, wild-looking, cold, cheerless hall, or refectory, in which they all assemble to dinner and supper, but no sitting-room. Their own apartments, in which they usually sit as well as sleep, are tolerably large, and decently clean, but have no fire-place. This, however, is common in all true Italian houses, and a brazier, full of ignited charcoal, is the usual and unwholesome substitute for the cheerful salutary blaze of a fire.

Six or seven of the nuns were sitting at work together, in one of their bed-rooms; for they have nothing in the world to do, except to pray and

make their clothes. They do, indeed, take in children to educate, though how they educate them is more than I can conceive; for though I was in every part of the convent, I could neither see nor hear of any book, except their prayer-books. When I asked them if they had not a Bible, they were shocked at such a profane idea.

They had luckily then only three pupils; but, in general, they have a considerable number. They shewed us a little theatre in the convent, where the children, assisted by some of the nuns, occasionally act sacred dramas during the Carnival, to a select audience of their female relatives.*

The nuns' apartments in every storey open upon a walk which runs round the quadrangle that forms their convent, and from the top of all they have a balcony, from which, O height of happiness! they can catch a distant glimpse of the Corso! They eagerly shewed it to us, and this peep of the world they had left, seemed their highest enjoyment.

Their eager curiosity about us—our persons,

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* These sacred dramas would, however, be considered of rather a profane nature in our country. Our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalen, the whole host of heaven—and even the Deity himself—are among the usual dramatis personæ. Several of their pious plays, or *mysteries*, as they are called, were acted at Rome on the public stage about Christmas time. These mysteries, the subjects of which were either founded on the legends of the Saints, or on Scripture history, were the earliest attempts at modern drama in Italy, and are still common.

names, situations, ages, reasons for coming to Italy, and to their convent—but, above all, about every article of our dress, its make, texture, fashion, and value, was quite insatiable; and the questions they asked perfectly unanswerable.

They have a large apothecary's shop in the convent, where medicines are compounded by two of the nuns, which must, I should think, be the death of many of them. The doctor, however, is the only man ever admitted into the convent, except the confessor and the Pope,—who once paid them a visit,—an event never to be forgotten.

I ought, too, to have excepted the Cardinal Vicario, who has the charge of all the convents, (I mean nunneries,) and must have enough upon his hands, I should think.

We saw two *Converti*, girls destined to be nuns, but who had not yet taken the noviciate veil. They were, however, called *Sposine*, the affianced spouses of Christ. Both were young, and one was very pretty and lively. She was a Lucchesa of a noble family, and had lived here two years,—and yet was resolved to be a nun,—a thing which is to me quite incomprehensible. Two days, I should think, would cure any body. She was only waiting her portion, which, in this convent, is unusually high, being 1500 crowns, beside a small annual stipend; the exact amount of which I have forgotten.

A novice, after taking the white veil, may leave the convent; and instances of it have occurred, but they are rare. Extreme ill health, an incurable disease, or the death of brothers and sisters, which

make it necessary for *the victim* to be recalled to support the name or fortune of the family, are almost, without exception, the reason of such events, when they do occur. Repentance,—disinclination, however often they may happen, are concealed or avowed in vain. A woman who should persist in returning to the world, would be welcomed, not only with its dread laugh, but its severest reprehension. Her family would consider themselves dishonoured, and, in all probability, would refuse to receive her—Her friends and acquaintance would scarcely associate with her—No man would ever look upon her for his wife—She would be an object for the finger of scorn to point at. Under such circumstances she must take the vows, or die.

It is only a few days since I saw a young lady, of noble family,—the Contessa M——, within these very walls, take those vows, which must therefore be considered irrevocable. She was young and handsome, and it was said that she entered the cloister by her own choice, uninfluenced by her parents. Still, it was a sufficiently melancholy sight, and I could not help thinking how often, in the long tedium of the living death to which she had doomed herself, she might look back to this moment with vain repentance,—not the less bitter because she could only blame herself: nor when I saw the crowds that filled the church—the pathway and altar strewed with flowers—the public applause—the gaze of strangers—the chorus of nuns—the blessings of Cardinals—the flattery of priests, and the tears of friends—could I help asking myself, if

the secret vanity of being the heroine of such a scene, might not have had its influence in her determination?

By particular favour, we had been furnished with billets for the best seats, and after waiting about half an hour, two footmen, in rich liveries, made way for the young countess, who entered the crowded church in full dress, her dark hair blazing with diamonds. Supported by her mother, she advanced to the altar. The ceremony you must often have heard described, and I need not fatigue you with a minute repetition of its details. The officiating priest was the Cardinal Vicario, a fine-looking old man; the discourse from the pulpit was pronounced by a Dominican monk, who addressed her as the affianced spouse of Christ,—a saint on earth;—one who had renounced the vanities of the world, for a foretaste of the joys of heaven. There was much of eulogium, and little of admonition—much rhapsody, and little sober reason or religion in it—very much that was calculated to inflame the inexperienced imagination, but little that could direct the erring judgment.

The sermon ended—the lovely victim herself, kneeling before the altar at the feet of the Cardinal, solemnly abjured that world whose pleasures and affections she seemed so well calculated to enjoy, and pronounced those irrevocable vows which severed her from them forever.

As her voice, in soft recitative, chaunted these fatal words, I believe there was scarcely an eye, in the whole of that vast church, unmoistened by tears.

The diamonds that sparkled in her dark hair were taken off; and her long and beautiful tresses fell luxuriantly down her shoulders. One lock of it was cut off by the Cardinal.

The grate that was to entomb her was opened. The Abbess and her black train of nuns appeared. Their choral voices chaunted a strain of welcome. It said, or seemed to say,

"Sister Spirit, come away!"

She renounced her name and title—adopted a new appellation—received the solemn benediction of the Cardinal, and the last embraces of her weeping friends—and passed that bourne through which she was never to return.

A pannel behind the High Altar now opened, and she appeared at the grate again. Here she was despoiled of her ornaments and her splendid attire, her beautiful hair was mercilessly severed from her head by the fatal shears of the sisters, and they hastened to invest her with the sober robes of the nun—the white coif and the noviciate veil. This *veil*, it may be necessary to explain, is a piece of cloth fixed on the top or back part of the head, and falling down behind, or on each side, in the same manner as on a veiled statue. It is not intended to conceal the face, nor can it answer that purpose; so that all you read in romances, about blushing nuns or novices pulling down their veils, to save them from the gaze of some admiring youth, is sheer nonsense. Indeed, they are in no danger of being incommoded with it, as they can never

more be seen by man. Their ordinary devotions are practised in a private chapel within the convent, and when they attend mass, they sit at the top of a lofty church, completely screened from view by a gilded grating, so close, that it is impervious to the external gaze, though the nuns can see through it.

The dress of the Franciscan Order, and, indeed, of every other I have ever seen, is plain and coarse, and far from beautiful. The gown is a black stuff, but with a waist so long, and a petticoat so full, that it is a complete disguise to the figure. The graces of the Venus di Medicis herself, if she were attired in such habiliments, would be lost. But the quantity of white linen that surrounded the head and face, was rather becoming to the bright eyes and lovely countenance of the young novice, and we all agreed that she looked prettier than before.

Throughout the whole ceremony she shewed great calmness and firmness, and it was not till all was over, that her eyes were moistened with the tears of natural emotion. She afterwards appeared at the little postern gate of the convent, to receive the sympathy, and praise, and congratulations of all her friends and acquaintance; nay, even of strangers, all of whom are expected to pay their compliments to the new spouse of heaven.

The history of one of the former nuns of this convent, as related to me by one of the sisters, is quite a romance, and in its most common-place style. Her name was Sasso Ferrato; she was left

an orphan and an heiress in infancy, and placed by her uncle, her sole guardian, here, with the intention of inducing her to take the veil, that her fortune might descend to him and to his family. It happened, however, that, at one of the grand processions of the Virgin, which the nuns were assembled to behold, the young Sasso Ferrato saw, and was seen by the captain of the guards, stationed at the convent, a younger son of the Guistiniani family, and a brother of one of her youthful companions in the convent. His visits to his sister became very frequent, and Sasso Ferrato generally contrived to accompany her friend on those occasions. They became desperately in love; but the cruel uncle refused his consent, and by arts which intimidated the young and inexperienced mind of Sasso Ferrato, by powerful interest, which rendered the complaints of her lover vain, and by his authority, as the representative of her parents, he succeeded in obliging her to take the veil. She only lived two years afterwards.

Her lover became a maniac, and after being confined for some time, continued, during the remaining years of his life, to roam about the neighbourhood of the city, his hair and beard growing wild, his dress neglected, and his manners gloomy and ferocious, though harmless in his actions.

A still more horrible catastrophe ensued at a convent in the north of Italy. An unfortunate girl, whose father was resolved to compel her to take the veil, contrary to her inclination, persisted for a long time in her refusal, but was treated with

such dreadful brutality at home, that at length she consented; but no sooner had she pronounced her vows, than she requested a private interview with her father at the grate of the convent; and when left alone with him, killed herself before his eyes, cursing him with her latest breath.

This story, romantic and improbable as it may seem, is quite true. I know the family, but refrain, from obvious reasons, from mentioning their name. It is not, however, true that girls are often forced to take the veil; but to say they never are, is equally false. I am informed that young nuns often fall in love with young friars, but that the attachment is perfectly Platonic. Indeed, so strict are *now* the rules of female monastic life, that I believe it must necessarily be so. But Love, it is well known, will break through bolts and bars, and grates and convent walls; and Love once inspired a nun with the project of getting out of her convent through a common sewer, which, however unsavoury a path, she frequently practised after night had covered the world with her sable curtain, and wrapped the peaceful sisterhood in the arms of Morpheus. Her nun's dress was deposited in her chamber, and the exterior dirty garment, with which she passed through the sewer, was exchanged for one her lover wrapped her in at its mouth. She used to walk with him sometimes for hours, but always returned to her convent before the dawn. One evening, however, on returning from her romantic ramble by moonlight, what was her horror to find the sewer—the well-known

passage—completely choaked up with water, and all entrance impracticable. Discovery would bring certain destruction on herself and her lover. Their lives would be the forfeit, or a solitary dungeon their mildest doom. Concealment was impracticable; for who would harbour them? Flight impossible; for without passports, the gates of the city would be closed against them; and could they scale the walls, no other would be open to them. In this situation, the courage and presence of mind of the nun saved them both. She went, dressed in her lover's clothes, to the house of the Cardinal Vicario, who was an old friend of her father's; disturbed the family; had the Cardinal roused out of bed on the plea of the most urgent and important business; obtained a private audience, threw herself at his feet, and confessed all. So earnestly did she implore him to save her and her family from the public disgrace of an exposure, that, melted by her tears, he followed the plan she suggested; ordered his carriage, took her, and one confidential chaplain on whose fidelity he could rely, drove to the convent, rang up the portress, and pretending he had received information of a man having entered and being concealed in it, demanded instant admittance to search it, which, in virtue of his office, could not be refused at any hour. He ordered the terrified sisters to remain in their rooms, and having dropped the disguised nun in hers, proceeded in his mock examination till she had disrobed herself, and his attendant had conveyed away the bundle of her clothes; then professing himself

perfectly satisfied that the information he had received was false, he left the convent,—taking care, however, next day, to have the sewer so closed, that it could never serve for any thing but a passage for dirty water again.

The most severe of the female monastic orders, is that of Santa Theresa, in which its unfortunate votaries are doomed to unceasing midnight vigils and daily fasts; to penance, austerity, and mortification, in every possible form; while all intercourse with their friends, all indulgence of the sweet affections of nature, are as sedulously interdicted as if these were crimes of the blackest dye. It is the great merit of their lives, that death is to be continually before their eyes,—continually present to their thoughts,—like a man that should stand rooted before a clock, with his eyes fixed on the hour to which it was tending, and lose, in its contemplation, the intervening moments. But to all intents and purposes, to all the duties, pleasures, and hopes of life, they are as completely dead as if the grave had already closed over them. And what is it but a living death,—a more lingering mode of being buried alive? That punishment which the fanaticism of Pagans inflicted on guilty vestal virgins, the fanaticism of Catholics inflicts upon the innocent—and they call this religion and virtue! Was man, then, born to seek to suffer, or was life given him only to contemplate its close? Was he, whom the very voice of Nature calls to partake of the common blessings Heaven has diffused upon the earth, condemned by its voice to en-

clude himself from the social duties, the natural enjoyments, and the sweet and innocent pleasures of our nature? Is he acting his allotted part, when, like a fiend on earth, he increases the quantity of human misery, and cuts off the sources of natural happiness? But I must restrain my indignation, as vain as it is just; for when did it avail to exclaim against any of the follies, the infatuation, or the crimes of man?

There is in Rome a convent, called, and justly called, the *Sepolto Vivo*,* in which are buried contumacious, or fanatic nuns, from all convents—females condemned by the Inquisition for too little, or too much religion—and wives and daughters, whose husbands and fathers have the means to prove they deserve, or the interest to procure the order for such a dreadful punishment. Instances have occurred, where mere resistance to the will of a parent, or causeless jealousy conceived by a husband, have been followed by this horrible vengeance. What may pass within its walls can never be known; none but its victims may enter, and none of them may quit it. They see no human being, excepting once a-year, when, in the presence of the abbess, they may have an interview with their father or mother; but they must not tell the secrets of their prison-house. They hear no tidings of the world that surrounds them, nor even

* It is near the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, and there were about forty unfortunate females immured in it when I was in Rome.

know when the friends dearest to them are removed by death.

I have been much interested in the fate of a poor nun, who, in the exaltation of a heated imagination, lately fancied herself inspired by heaven, and destined to convert sinners to repentance. The tribunal of the Inquisition has decided that her claims to inspiration are unfounded, and though it appears that she was a fanatic, not an impostor, they have thrown her into this horrible tomb, whither—if it be the fit punishment for all holy cheats—I think its members might all go themselves.

By far the least exceptionable species of nunnery here, is that of the *Tor' de Specchi'*, where a company of respectable women, chiefly widows, of small fortune, live together, and lead a rational, regular, and religious life, without binding themselves by any vows, but obey certain rules, and are under the direction of a Superior, who is elected by themselves, and only holds her office for a limited period. They wear a uniform dress; have the power to go out, with certain restrictions; and are much more free and independent, in all respects, than any other similar community. They may leave it if they choose. Such an institution as this in our own country, would be a most respectable and comfortable asylum for unprotected unmarried women, and widows of small fortune. These ladies also educate children.

I forgot to mention, that in the month of May, there are few convents in which the nuns do not

enjoy the privilege of going out in a body in coaches into the country, where they dine and spend the day at the house, and with the female friends of the Superior, or some of the sisters. Some convents have both a whole and a half holiday; others only the latter. I often met them last spring in their annual festivals, and it was delightful to see their countenances of almost anxious joy, and the wild astonished eagerness with which they gazed on the houses, the passengers, the carriages, the fields, the trees, the fair face of Nature, and the interdicted figure of man.

It is very common among the higher orders of both sexes in Rome, to retire into a convent for a few days or a week, (generally Passion week,) of every year, to practice prayer and penance, during which period they strictly conform to the rules of the community, and not unfrequently increase the austerity of their fasts and vigils; not to mention hearing four sermons a-day.

For this purpose of secular penitence, there is one convent appointed for men, and another for women, which are amongst the most rigorous in their discipline. That destined for the poor females, is, in reality, a dreary abode; but the Convent of St John and St Paul, which is the place of penitence for the male sex, appeared to me rather a desirable retreat. Its long corridors, and spacious apartments, are clean, light, and cheerful, and it contains an extensive library.

There is nothing worth notice in the church of this convent, excepting that you are shewn the very

spot of the martyrdom of St John and St Paul, who were not the apostles—only saints of that name. Lorenzo di Medici wrote a pious drama, or mystery, commemorating their fate, which was acted at Florence with all the magnificence of his reign. These saints, who were brothers, were treated with distinguished favour by Santa Constantia for being Christians, and beheaded by Julian the Apostate for the same reason. Their death was avenged by a certain St Mercury, who got out of his grave on purpose to kill that emperor in a battle. These two murders are the only incidents of the piece, which ends like Tom Thumb, in the slaughter of the whole dramatis personæ.

The monks had never heard of this drama, but seemed pleased when I mentioned it, though they did by no means agree to my proposal of having it enacted in honour of their patron saints, on the spot of their martyrdom.

The gardens of this convent, which hang on the summit of the Cœlian Hill, amidst a dark grove of cypress, command one of the most striking prospects which even Rome can boast,—of the mighty Coliseum in the plain below,—the Triumphal Arches,—and the mouldering palace of the Cæsars, which crown the dark summit of the Palatine.

An aged palm tree, which is supposed to have flourished here from time immemorial, and may almost be reckoned a natural antiquity, still throws its tropical shade in the court of the convent. I once descended from these gardens into the vine-

yard beneath them, to examine the ancient walls of unknown Roman ruins, which here surround and support the precipitous banks of the Cœlian Hill. Their date, and author, and purpose, are alike unknown. The deep caves and recesses into which they are formed, are not easily referable to any known species of building.

Facing the Coliseum, there is an isolated fragment of ruin, to which tradition has assigned the name of the Rostrum of Cicero, and from which, it is said, he harangued the Roman people. I scrambled up its broken walls, and stood on the green platform at its summit, merely because the name of Cicero had attached to it a charm; for most certainly his voice never poured forth its persuasive eloquence here.

The Superior of this convent, with four hundred other priests and friars, was sent to Corsica, and was imprisoned, (as he said) during two years and a half, in a dungeon, upon bread and water, for refusing to take the oath of allegiance to Buonaparte.

At the expiration of that period, he was liberated with his companions from prison, but kept under strict surveillance; and only regained his liberty when the Pope returned, and the French were expelled.

The conduct of these ecclesiastics will be censured or applauded, according to the views of those by whom they are judged. This, however, I will observe, that their fidelity to their banished and

degraded master, through exile, poverty, and imprisonment, when no hope of the re-establishment of his power could actuate them, has something in it of sincerity and disinterestedness, that would seem to place the reality of these qualities above suspicion, — even although their possessors are friars.

LETTER LXXIX.

MIRACLES.

31st April, 1817.

The age of miracles I thought had passed, but I have discovered my mistake. Within this little month three great miracles have happened in Rome. The last took place yesterday, when all Rome crowded to the Capitol to see an image of the Virgin opening her eyes. Unluckily, we were in the country, and did not return in time to witness it, for as this miracle was thought a very improper one by the higher powers, who would rather she had winked at certain practices which it is thought she had not only opened her own eyes upon, but those of other people,—she was carried away, and certain priests, who are supposed to have been in her confidence on this occasion, have been shut up in prison. Two officers of the Guarda Nobile are also in custody at the State prison at the Castle San Angelo, for expressions which implied no extraordinary admiration of the present state of things. It is so nearly impossible to get at the bottom of any thing in Rome, that both these disgraced military and clergy may have given much more reason for

their enthralment than we hear of; but this very concealment of their offences, makes one rejoice in living under a government, in which the truth must be made known, and in which no man can be shut up in a dungeon at the pleasure either of priests or princes, without being tried and condemned by his fellow-citizens. In this respect, things are neither better nor worse here now, than in the time of the French, who shut people up with quite as little ceremony, and still less lenity.

The last miracle was of a much more orthodox description.—The miraculous Madonna, in this case, opened her mouth instead of her eyes, and spoke to an old washerwoman, to whom she imparted her discontent at being so much neglected, and her chapel left in such a dirty and ruinous condition; while so many other Madonnas, no better than she, had theirs made as fine as hands could make them. The Madonna spoke no more, but the old washerwoman proved a very loquacious reporter of her wishes and sentiments. The news of the miracle spread like wildfire; thousands (I am not exaggerating) may be seen every day crowding to this little old chapel, near St John Lateran's, about four in the afternoon, the hour at which the Virgin addressed the washerwoman; it being supposed that this is her favourite time for conversation; but I have not heard that she has made any new observations. Not only the lower orders, but crowds of well-dressed people, and handsome equipages of all sorts, daily throng the door; and the long green avenue that leads within the walls to the

Porta San Giovanni, instead of an unbroken solitude, now wears the appearance of a cried fair.

At the corner of every street, you stumble over a chair set out with a white cloth, a little picture of the Madonna, and a plate for collections to beautify her chapel. You are assailed on all sides with little begging-boxes for the Madonna's beautification; and even the interests of the holy souls in Purgatory are forgotten, in the pious zeal to make her fine enough.

To see the luck of some Madonnas!—Thus this Madonna, who opened her mouth to one old washerwoman, has come to great honours and credit; while the other, who opened her eyes to hundreds, has fallen into great disgrace. One Madonna is born, I suppose, according to the proverb, with a silver spoon in her mouth, and another with a pewter one. But this is by no means the whole of our miracles; for, as if one Madonna scorned to be outdone by another, there is an old dirty cobwebby Virgin in the Pantheon, which has lately begun to work miracles, and has drawn such crowds to her shrine, that an unhappy stranger can scarcely get in to see the building itself. It is probably by no means the only miracle which its walls have witnessed. Italy seems always to have been the land of superstition; and the Pagan miracles that are upon record, at least equal the Catholic, both in number and absurdity. Every page of Livy and Plutarch abounds with them. Not a year passes without two or three oxen speaking, though we never hear any of their sayings. Now, even a Ma-

donna but rarely makes use of her tongue, and oxen have entirely given up talking. However, it is a different thing hearing nonsense that was credited ages ago, and seeing it before one's eyes: and when I behold crowds flocking to kneel before these talking and winking Madonnas, I cannot help asking myself, if this is really the nineteenth century? One would have thought there had been miracles enough of late in Rome, to have satisfied any reasonable people; but the Pope and a detachment of Cardinals are going about every day after dinner in quest of more. They visit all the Madonnas in town, in regular succession. They began with Santa Maria Maggiore, who takes precedence of all the rest here, and they will not leave one unapplied to till they get what they want,—which is rain; for the country, with the unexampled cold and drought of the spring, is dried up—vegetation is pined and withering; and there is but too much reason to dread that the miseries which the poor have suffered during the last dreadful year of scarcity, will be increased tenfold in the next. Pestilence is already added to famine;—the lower orders are perishing by hundreds of a low contagious fever, brought on by want, and numbers have literally died of hunger by the way-sides. This dreadful mortality at present extends all over Italy, and the sufferings of the living are still more cruel and heart-rending than the number of the dead. You daily see human beings crawling on the dunghills, and feeding on the most loathsome garbage, to satisfy the cravings of nature. That this may occa-

sionally be done to call forth charity, is unquestionable; but it is also done when no eye is visibly near; and the extremity of misery,—the ghastly famine that is written in the looks, cannot be feigned. The failure of those teeming harvests that usually cover the earth, spreads among the improvident and overflowing population of this country, horrors of famine of which you can have no conception. The dying and the dead surround us on all sides;—the very streets are crowded with sick, and the contagion of the fever is thought so virulent, that a cordon of troops is drawn around the Great Hospital of the Borgo San Spirito, to prevent communication with its infected inmates. The medical treatment in this fever is universally condemned by all the English physicians here; and the general management of the hospitals cannot be sufficiently reprobated. Want of medical skill, and want of care, perhaps equally conduce to the remarkable mortality which reigns in them; but, from the returns, it appears that *forty-six* per cent. die at the hospital of San Spirito at Rome, whereas at Paris the average is only *seven* per cent., and in England it seldom exceeds *four!*

With some few exceptions, I have observed throughout Italy a want of cleanliness, and especially of ventilation in the hospitals, which is more unpardonable, because they are built upon an immense scale; and yet the patients are crowded together, while spacious wards are left unoccupied, to save the paltry expence of a few additional attendants. Such at least was the reason repeatedly

assigned for this gross mismanagement. The bad effects of such heat and confinement to the sick, must be doubly prejudicial in this climate.

It was originally a truly Italian idea to erect a great hospital for the recovery of health, in the very spot which, from the days of the ancient Romans to the present times, has been the most noted for its unhealthiness. The Hospital of the Spirito Santo stands in the worst region of the malaria; so that, if the object had been to kill instead of cure the patients, this should have been the place chosen for the purpose. If the Hospital of the Incurables, which stands in a very healthy situation, had been placed here, there might have been some excuse for it, since it could scarcely be regretted that the lives of those destined to hopeless sufferings should be shortened. But even abandoned infants are received, and nurtured in sickness, at the Hospital San Spirito; and its benefits, such as they are, are open to all ages, sexes, and nations.

I remember at Florence, in driving about the town, being struck with the extraordinary appearance of an hospital, entirely open to the street at one end from top to bottom, and divided from it only by iron bars, so that the passengers had the full view of all the patients in their beds; and of every operation, of whatever nature, which went on during sickness; while the poor invalids must have been distracted with the incessant rattle of the wheels. Some of the patients who were up, were talking to their acquaintance without the grate, so that diseases never could have a finer op-

portunity of spreading. The want of decency, as well as common sense and humanity, in this arrangement, is too obvious to require comment. I have, however, only been as yet one day of my life in Florence, and consequently know nothing of the reasons for this strange system,—if reasons there be.

But, to return to the miracles, from which I have wandered so far. I understand that not one happened during the whole reign of the French, and that it was not until the streets were purified with *lustrations* of holy water, on the return of the Pontiff, that they began to operate again.

Private miracles, indeed, affecting individuals, go on quite commonly every day, without exciting the smallest attention. These generally consist in procuring prizes in the lottery, curing diseases, and casting out devils.

The mode of effecting this last description of miracle was communicated to me the other day by an Abâte here, and, as I think it extremely curious, I shall relate it to you.

It seems that a certain Friar had preached a sermon during Lent, upon the state of the man mentioned in Scripture possessed with seven devils, with so much eloquence and unction, that a simple country man who heard him, went home, and became convinced that these seven devils had got possession of him. The idea haunted his mind, and subjected him to the most dreadful terrors, till, unable to bear his sufferings, he unbosomed himself to his ghostly father, and asked his counsel. The father, who had some smattering of science,

bethought himself at last of a way to rid the honest man of his devils, and his money together. He told him it would be necessary to combat with the devils singly: and on a day appointed, when the poor man came with a sum of money—without which the good father had forewarned him the devil never could be dislodged—he bound a chain, connected with an electrical machine in an adjoining chamber, round his body—lest, as he said, the devil should fly away with him—and having warned him that the shock would be terrible when the devil went out of him, he left him praying devoutly before an image of the Madonna, and after some time, gave him a pretty smart shock, at which the poor wretch fell insensible on the floor from terror. As soon as he recovered, however, he protested that he had seen the devil fly away out of his mouth, breathing blue flames and sulphur, and that he felt himself greatly relieved. Seven electrical shocks, at due intervals, having extracted seven sums of money from him together with the seven devils, the man was cured, and a great miracle performed.

To us, this transaction seemed a notable piece of credulous superstition on the one hand, and fraudulent knavery on the other; but to our friend the Abâte, it only seemed an ingenious device to cure of his fears a simpleton over whose mind reason could have no power,—as the physician cured the lady who fancied she had a nest of live earwigs in her stomach, not by arguing with her on the absurdity of such a notion, but by shewing her that an ear-

wig was killed with a single drop of oil, and making her swallow a quantity of it. But with respect to the man and his devils, I would ask, why inspire superstitious terrors to conquer them by deceit, and why make him pay so much money? Yet this is nothing to other things that daily happen. Would you believe that there has actually been in Rome a trial for witchcraft?—a grave formal trial for witchcraft, in the nineteenth century! I began to think I must be mistaken, and that the world had been pushed back about three hundred years. But it is even so.

There is certainly more superstition in the south of Italy than the north, because there is more ignorance: In Milan, and in most of the cities of Lombardy, it is rapidly disappearing with the diffusion of knowledge and science. Yet Florence, enlightened as she is, has a reasonable share; and miracles, and miraculous Madonnas, abound nearly as much in Tuscany as in the Estates of the Church, as I have good reason to know. Even the liquefaction of St Januarius's blood,—which is generally quoted as the *comble* of superstition, is not without its parallel. At Mantua, a bottle of the blood of Christ is liquefied every year, to the great edification of the countrymen of Virgil. The bottle, containing this *real blood* of Christ, was dug up at Mantua, in a box about 200 years ago, with a written assurance that it had been deposited there by a St Longinus, a Roman Centurion, who witnessed the crucifixion, and became converted, and ran away from Judea to Mantua with this bottle

of blood; and after lying sixteen centuries in the ground, the box, the writing, the bottle and the blood, were as fresh as if placed there only the day before!

But I might write a book of miracles, were I to relate the hundredth part of all that takes place every year—nay, every day, in Italy. So I have done.

LETTER LXXX.

BLESSING OF THE HORSES—FESTAS—ITALIAN MANNERS.

Sunday, Jan. 18*th*, 1819.

We were present to-day at one of the most ridiculous scenes I ever witnessed, even in this country. It was St Anthony's Blessing of the Horses, which began on that saint's day, and I understand lasts for a week; but as this was a *festone*, I rather imagine we saw it in its full glory. We drove to the church of the saint, near Santa Maria Maggiore, and could scarcely make our way through the streets, from the multitudes of horses, mules, asses, oxen, cows, sheep, goats, and dogs, which were journeying along to the place of benediction; their heads, tails, and necks, decorated with bits of coloured ribbon and other finery, on this—their unconscious gala day. The saint's benediction, though nominally confined to horses, is equally efficacious, and equally bestowed upon all quadrupeds; and I believe there is scarcely a brute in

Rome, or the neighbourhood, that has not participated in it.

An immense crowd were assembled in the wide open space in front of the church, and from the number of beasts and men, it looked exactly like a cattle fair. At the door stood the blessing priest, dressed in his robes, and wielding a brush in his hand, which he continually dipped into a huge bucket of holy water, that stood near him, and spirted at the animals as they came up, in unremitting succession, taking off his little skull cap, and muttering every time,—" Per intercessionem beati Antonii Abatis hæc animalia liberantur a malis in nomine Patris et filii et Spiritus Sancti.—Amen !"

The poor priest had such hard work in blessing, that he was quite exhausted and panting, and his round face looked fiery red with his exertions. The rider, or driver of the creature, always gave some piece of money, larger or smaller, in proportion to his means or generosity, and received an engraving of the saint, and a little metallic cross; however, all animals might be blessed gratis.

Several well-dressed people, in very handsome equipages, attended with out-riders in splendid liveries, drove up while we were there, and sat uncovered till the benediction was given. Then having paid what they thought fit, they drove off and made way for others.

One adventure happened, which afforded us some amusement. A countryman having got a blessing on his beast, putting his whole trust in its

power, set off from the church-door at a grand gallop, and had scarcely cleared a hundred yards, before the ungainly animal tumbled down with him, and over its head he rolled into the dirt. He soon got up, however, and shook himself, and so did the horse, without either seeming to be much the worse. The priest seemed not a whit out of countenance at this catastrophe; and some of the standers by, exclaimed, with laudable stedfastness of faith, "that but for the blessing they might both have broken their necks."

St Antonio must get very rich with this traffic. I cannot omit mentioning, however, that the priest, who very civilly presented us with some of the prints and crosses of St Antonio, could not be prevailed on to accept of any remuneration.

There is a peculiar and more solemn sort of blessing, given to two lambs, on the 21st of January, at the Church of St Agnese, *fuori le murà*, from the sainted fleeces of which are manufactured, I believe by the hands of nuns, two holy mantles, called *Pallj;* which the Pope presents to the Archbishops, as his principal shepherds. It is incredible the sums of money that used to be given in former days, for the least scrap of these precious garments,—but times are sadly changed, as an old priest pathetically observed to me.

They still, however, carry a remnant of the Virgin Mary's own nuptial veil annually in solemn procession to the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, where it is still adored; and the marriage of Christ and St Catherine is still celebrated with

great pomp, on the anniversary of their wedding-day, the 29th of January, at the Church of Santa Maria *Sopra Minerva*, and held as a grand festa.

Nothing, indeed, can exceed the strictness with which the observance of the festas is enforced in Rome. I have seen a printed proclamation which was circulated on the Pope's return, inculcating, in the strongest terms, this duty so long comparatively neglected, of doing nothing on these holidays; and denouncing heavy penalties against the disobedient. Idleness, this paramount obligation, thus enjoined by the religion and laws, is, besides, too consonant to the disposition of the people to be disobeyed; and accordingly, there are upwards of seventy Festas in the year, besides the hebdomadal one of Sunday, in which the sin of being guilty of any useful employment, or, indeed, any employment at all, is cautiously avoided by the Romans. The manner in which these festas are spent, is, indeed, highly characteristic of the people.

After mass, the lower orders throng the streets in a state of complete apathetic vacuity of mind, and bodily inertion. You see the strange spectacle of a crowd at rest, content with the delight of listless indolence, and seeming to feel that exertion is positive evil—they neither talk, walk, act, think, sing, dance, or play. With a loose coat or cloak, folded round them, they stand lounging about, basking in the sun, or lie doggishly on the ground —solitary, though in a crowd—and grave, though without thought.

I have seen the Tuscan peasants dance merrily to the bagpipe, and the Neapolitan Lazzaroni sing at evening to "the light guitar," or dance in rags on the pavement of the Chiaja. I have heard that child of pleasure, the happy Venetian, forgetful of all his wrongs and sorrows, carol through the soft summer night the melodies that endear to him his amphibious country; but I have rarely seen the Roman populace do any thing.

Dancing publicly on Sundays is not, indeed, allowed at Rome, any more than plays or operas; but there are many Festas when they might dance and do not; nor do they resort to music, or any sort of amusement or occupation for pleasure.

The only active diversion of the common people here, is one I scarcely know to "name to ears polite." It is a sort of chase—a hunting of heads—not for ideas, but for things much more tangible and abundant. You see them eagerly engaged in this pursuit, on a Sunday, or Festa, sitting at their doors, or windows, or in the open streets; often three, one above another; the middle one at once hunting and hunted. I remember the Portugueze, even those of the higher orders, used to follow the same sport.

The middle classes dawdle about the streets, or the promenade on the Trinità de' Monti, in a dull torpefied sort of state, not seeming to snail along with any sensation or hope of enjoyment, but because they cannot tell what else to do with themselves.

The women of this shop-keeper class, are sometimes dressed most ludicrously fine; satin gowns of all colours, and often white, trailing about the dirty streets, and thin pink, or yellow slippers, sticking fast in the mud; their necks, and often their heads bare. The ladies of Rome, and indeed throughout Italy, (by ladies I mean exclusively the nobility,) never walk, never ride on horseback, and never move but in a carriage. Indeed, the men rarely walk, and still more rarely ride. The only time I ever remember seeing a Roman nobleman on horseback, he tumbled off.

The country around Rome, perhaps, abounds more in game, than any other part of the civilized world, yet no Roman is ever seen to engage in any description of field-sports. Many of the English gentlemen have gone from hence to the mountains, to chace the wild boar; but the Romans never hunt now. The days when even the distant echoes of the Lake of Bolsena, rang with the horns of Leo X., and his jovial Cardinals, are indeed gone by; and though such diversions may not be very becoming in a Pope, they are very proper for a prince.

But the Roman nobility hunt not, shoot not, read not, write not, think not.—What then do they do?

> "Why, through the dull unvaried round of life,
> "They keep the joyless tenor of their way."

Sunk in indolence, they perhaps dawdle through the forenoon with their *Dama*, like duteous *Cava-*

lieri Serventi; and in the afternoon, daily do these unfortunates meander up and down the Corso in their carriages, for two mortal hours, just before dark, when the evening is falling cold and gloomy. There is some sense in this in summer, but none, that I can discover, in the dead of winter. I have often seen young Italian noblemen performing this dowager-like airing, shut up alone in a coach. On Festas, not only all the nobles who have, but all the Bourgeois who can hire carriages for the occasion, drive up and down the Corso at this fashionable hour, dressed, of course, as fine as they can make themselves; for the sole diversion must consist in seeing and in being seen,—in furtherance of which laudable end, they generally appear in open carriages, in defiance of the cold winter *Tramontane,** and wear their heads and necks uncovered: often when I have been shivering in my furs, I have seen the Roman belles at night-fall sitting motionless, exposed to the cutting blast, in this open drawing-room costume. A drawing-room costume, however, here it is not; for, in the evening conversazione, a large bonnet is the usual head-dress, and it often appears with an exposed neck. In general, however, it is only in the grand *Accademia's* of music or dancing, which are equivalent to our private balls and concerts, that the style of evening dress to

* The north-west wind, which blows, as its name implies, from the Alps. It is the mitigated *Bize* of Switzerland.

which we are habitually used in England, is seen. But these grand entertainments are rare, and even the humbler conversazione is far from common; so that in a town where there is no theatre, or place of public amusement, except during the Carnival; and where dinner and supper parties are unknown; nothing can be conceived more unsocial, or more *gloomily* domestic than the habits of the nobility of Rome.

It is most certain, that before the spoliations and heavy contributions, arbitrarily levied upon them by the French, by which numbers of ancient families were reduced to complete beggary, and almost all to comparative indigence; their lives were much gayer, and their intercourse, both with each other and with strangers, much more frequent and unconstrained. To this, not only the Romans themselves, but many of our own English friends, who have been at Rome, at different periods, (from fourteen to thirty years back,) and are now revisiting it, bear witness. It certainly seems strange, that even poverty should put an end to society that costs nothing; for in the few Roman conversazione that still remain, (the wrecks of happier days,) no refreshment whatever, not even a glass of *eau sucrée*, is ever offered. But the pomp of long trains of liveried menials,—without which the proud Roman will not open his house,—few can boast, and many have no houses to open. Their palaces are let to strangers, converted into shops or caffés, half shut up, or wholly abandoned. In general, the

poor Duke, Count, or Marquis,—the poorest denizen of his own palace, inhabits some mean *appartemento* in the attics, among obscurity, dirt, pride, penury, and wretchedness.

Even among those noble families, whose once princely revenues, however diminished, are still very considerable, not even the outward semblance of cordiality, or the hollowness of the courtesies of polished life, seems to exist; but cold repulsive distrust and dislike are openly manifested.

Ancient feuds and jealousies seem to have abated nothing of their bitterness; and in the recent changes and revolutions, new ones have been engendered. Real or imaginary wrongs, political differences, private pique and quarrels, envy, jealousy, and suspicion, have combined to alienate these few from each other.

Almost the only Roman house now which is regularly open for a conversazione, in the old style, and to which all who have been introduced have a general invitation, is that of the Duchessa di F——, a woman of considerable spirit and talent, who is wise enough not to forego the pleasures of society, because she has lost those of opulence. She receives company on the evenings of the two ordinary weekly Festa, Sunday and Thursday. Thursday, being before these two days of mortification, Friday and Saturday, is considered a *festina;* but Sunday, being after them, is a grand Festa.

This lady contrives to make her parties tolerably pleasant, without music, dancing, cards, books. prints, amusements, or refreshments of any sort.

It is literally a *conversazione;* for there is nothing else to be had, and not always even that. Whether it is from the perversity of human nature, that people are always less inclined to what they are obliged to do, or not, I cannot say, but sometimes the conversation languishes, and I have serious apprehensions that we shall all begin to yawn in each other's faces. One advantage is, that one need never stay above ten minutes, if it should wear this dull aspect, but drive off in search of something better. Few Romans are to be seen at these parties, but all the ambassadors and distinguished foreigners of all countries. Of late there has been rather too great an intermixture of English.

Torlonia, now the Duke Torlonia, the banker, has a weekly party, something like an English rout; and music and gambling are there the amusements.

Twice a-week, the fashionable world lounge through Count B——'s, the French ambassador's rooms. There is a gaming table for those who like to play, and ices for those who like to eat, and scandal for those who like to talk. But the best parties in Rome are given by a lady whose learning and talents would place her in the first class in any country, and who perhaps, in habits and character, is more Italian than British. I mean the D—— of D——.

The mass of English visitors give *to the English* such parties at Rome as they would give in London, only on a smaller, duller, meaner scale. At these there are few foreigners, excepting a certain Cardinal, who goes every where, and is a great flirt

of the young English ladies,—and perhaps some half dozen of different nations besides.

Occasionally, the Austrian, Neapolitan, Portugueze, and French ambassadors, open their houses for a grand *Ricevimento*, or Accademia of Music, or Dancing, and these are attended by many of the Roman nobles and Cardinals. But at the first sound of the dance, the red-legged race must vanish, like evil spirits at the crowing of the cock. One great cause of the stagnation of society in Rome, is evidently the want of the lead, and impulse of its head. A court which has its fêtes in the church, instead of the drawing-room, can be no promoter of gaiety; and the princely priests, who form its numbers, can *now* give no entertainments, because they can receive no ladies. Besides, where ladies do not reign, the spirit of society is wanting.

I have, however, spent many delightful hours in the select circles of those who neither derive their consideration from rank nor fortune; and where I have rarely seen any English face except my own. I speak of Roman families, as well as foreigners.

Lucien Buonaparte receives, in the evening, in his own family circle, without form, a select few, who have been particularly presented to him; and those who have once felt the charm of that chosen society, will not easily relinquish it. His sister, the Princess Paolina Borghese, sees only her *particular friends;* and it is easier, and perhaps more generally desirable to gentlemen than ladies, to be included among them.

Rome, from its peculiar attractions, must always be the chosen resort of the most enlightened strangers, as it is the permanent residence of many men of the first genius of the age. It therefore possesses, to a certain degree, some of the best elements of society; and yet it must be owned, that neither Rome, nor any part of Italy, can boast the splendour and brilliancy of the first circles of London, or even of Paris. The tone of fashion, fortune, high-bred ease, and polished gaiety, is wanting. The *framing* of the picture is not good.

A traveller always exposes himself to suspicion, who censures the society of the country which he visits. Even by his own countrymen he is thought an illiberal and prejudiced—or, at best, an incompetent judge. Whereas, he who praises, obtains at an easy rate, a reputation for candour, liberality, and discernment. Fully sensible of this, and of the invidious nature of the office I am undertaking, I still must, if I am to speak at all, speak what I think. We naturally, wherever we go, compare the state of society and manners to those of our own country, and that comparison, I must say, tends much to the disadvantage of Italy.

From the false inferences and egregious misconceptions into which many enlightened foreigners have fallen in judging of English manners, I feel considerable diffidence in censuring those of other countries; but prolonged experience, and, I think, impartial observation, have only shewn me, in more glaring colours, the general corruption of manners, and contempt of moral duties, which reign in this

country. I have endeavoured to divest myself of my English prejudices, but there are some no Englishwoman can wish to get rid of. Accustomed, from our earliest infancy, to all the refinements of social life, to delicacy of sentiment, propriety of conduct, and a high sense of moral rectitude, their violation shocks our habits, our principles, and even our taste. It seems to me, that the low standard of morals here degrades manners also.

In the manners and habits, in the very air of the Italian ladies, there is a want of elegance and delicacy. A certain grossness and vulgarity of mind seems to adhere to them in all they do and say. They encourage liberties of speech, which would offend and disgust our country-women; and the strain of uniform gallantry, hyperbolical flattery, and unadulterated nonsense of the worst description, in which the men usually address them, and which they seem to like and expect, is a very decisive proof of the difference between the female character here and in England. Until a very decided change take place in that of the Italian women, there can be no improvement in the society at large; and I look upon the system of *cavalieri serventi* to be destructive of the morals, the usefulness, and the respectability of the female character.

It is true, that it is considered necessary here, if a lady visit at all, that she should be attended by her *cavaliere servente;* and if her husband should escort her, she would inevitably be laughed at,—but who are the imposers of this necessity, and who the raisers of the laugh? It is the ladies them-

selves. The cause of this vile system may be easily found in the still more odious one, of marriages being made an affair of perfect convenience, a bargain transacted by the parents or guardians,—the inclinations of the parties thus disposed of, rarely, if ever, being consulted. It sometimes happens, that they are betrothed in infancy; and sometimes, the whole treaty is concluded without their even meeting. I know an instance in which the *sposa* was introduced to her future lord and master, for the first time, the day before the nuptial ceremony took place. Nor is it only young people, dependent upon the will of their parents, who are thus tied together for life. A young nobleman of my acquaintance, completely his own master, and possessed of a reasonable share of sense, and abundance of self-will about other things, lately passively took a woman whom his friends singled out for him as a suitable match, never dreaming of choosing for himself.

A man *may* fall in love, and marry in Italy, but it is a rare occurrence. Both sexes generally marry without love, and love without marrying. With such unions, it is evident there cannot be much domestic happiness. The lady, sooner or later, looks out for a *cavaliere servente*. This privilege, indeed, is not, as has been pretended, stipulated in the marriage-contract, for that would be quite unnecessary,—no husband ever dreams of opposing this just right; and if he did, he would be exposed to universal derision. In general, he seems quite reconciled to it, and the lady, the cavaliere, and the husband, harmoniously form what a witty friend of

mine once called an *equilatero triangolo.* The only thing that surprises me in Italy is, that there ever should be such a thing as a husband at all. Such things are, however, and the poor man often consoles himself by choosing a lady to his own taste, and becoming the *cavaliere servente* of some other man's wife; or, disliking the shackles of this servitude, he amuses himself with more general gallantry, or more varied intrigues. Indeed, if the husband's lot be hard, that of the *cavaliere servente* is harder still. How the Italian ladies get any man to submit to it, is to me incomprehensible. I am certain no Englishman could be made into one for a single week, by any art or contrivance. These unfortunate creatures must submit to all their mistress's humours, and obey all her commands,—run up and down wherever she directs them, tie her shoe, carry her lap-dog or pocket-handkerchief, flirt her fan, and flatter her vanity: be constant in their attendance on her morning toilet, her evening airing, and her nightly opera. Sometimes one lady has two or three of these poor animals, whom she distinguishes by different degrees of favour, but in general one is the stated allowance; and constancy to her *cavaliere* is considered highly praiseworthy, though fidelity to her husband is only laughed at. I am serious in asserting that it *is* laughed at,—I mean, that a woman who has no *cavaliere servente* at all, and makes her husband her companion and protector, is despised and ridiculed by all her female acquaintance.

I am, however, far from intending to insinuate that the connexion between a lady and her *cavaliere servente* is always, or even generally, of a criminal nature. But I will say, that nobody can prove that it is innocent. We may charitably believe that she is virtuous; but we cannot feel the same certainty of the purity of her character, as we do of that of an Englishwoman, who has no such connexion. The fair Italian admits him at all hours, constantly associates with him, exacts unremitting attention from him, and lays herself under daily, and often pecuniary, obligations to him. She may be innocent; but we also feel it is possible she may not. Yet, granting the connexion to be purely Platonic, is it likely to be conducive to domestic happiness, or female respectability, that a woman should allow her time, thoughts, and affections, to be more devoted to her lover than her husband; that she should take more pains to please him, and live more in his society? Or granting him not to be her lover, but only her friend, is it desirable that she should have a better and dearer friend than her husband? I will not say that the system of *cavalieri serventi* is universal. There is no rule without exceptions. But after a two year's residence in Italy, and a very general acquaintance among the Italians, I have known few without them; except brides, who as yet have not chosen them, or aged ladies, who have lost them. In the past, present, or future tense, *cavalieri serventi* are common to them all.

But whatever may be our opinion of the nature of this connexion, and of the virtue of the fair Italians; that of their own countrymen, as well as of all the foreigners of all nations whom I have heard speak of them, is undeviating as to their general frailty. Indeed, to do them justice, the very pretence of virtue is often wanting. Such is the general toleration of vice, that no extremes of licentiousness, however open,—no amours, however numerous or notorious, ever in this country, exclude a woman from the society in which her rank entitles her to move.

In the other sex it is the same. The most dishonourable and contemptible conduct a man can be guilty of, will not banish him from his place in society. The countenance thus given to unblushing profligacy, and the indifference, perhaps the sneers, with which virtue is received, is one of the most painfully convincing proofs of the depraved state of morals.

The Italian noblemen, for the most part, are ill-educated, ignorant, and illiterate. I could give some curious proofs of this, but I will content myself with mentioning one, which I witnessed the other night at the Opera, when half-a-dozen dukes, marquisses, and counts, from different parts of Italy, who were in the box with us, began disputing whether Peru, which happened to be the scene of the piece, was in the East Indies, in Africa,—or, as one of them, for a wonder, was inclined to think—in America!

It is not, however, so much their want of know-

ledge, as their want of principle, that renders them despicable. No ennobling pursuit, no honourable end of existence, gives its useful stimulus to their lives, or energy, dignity, and consistency to their characters. In little things as well as great, their conduct is mean. At a select ball, given by the King of Naples in the Royal Palace, I remember seeing numbers of the principal Neapolitan nobility, who made it their sole occupation to stand beside the tables of refreshments, and pocket the cakes and sweetmeats by large handfuls, as fast as the servants brought them. Their dresses, for it was a fancy-dress ball, seemed to be composed of large sacks, from the quantity which they contained.

In Sicily, at the British mess-table, some friends of ours were eye-witnesses to the fact of the silver spoons being pocketed by two Sicilian noblemen, who dined there by invitation, and this circumstance happened more than once.

I might easily multiply instances, but I will only add, that, in two cases which came under my own knowledge at Naples, two noblemen of the first consideration there, cheated two English friends of ours, to whom they had let a part of their houses, in the most dishonourable manner. One of them, after letting his rooms, by a written agreement, on the same terms as those on which the preceding occupier had had them, pledged his solemn word of honour that he had received from him a much higher price than, on investigation, it was proved to be; and the other, with whom the agreement was ver-

bal, repeatedly sent back the proffered monthly payments, expressing a wish to receive it all when our friend quitted his house; at which time he demanded double the stipulated sum, and confirmed his assertion on oath! Any thing may be proved at Naples, for witnesses regularly attend the courts to be hired to swear to any fact; and our friend was obliged to pay this iniquitous demand.

Another Italian nobleman swindled one of our countrymen out of a large sum of money, in a still more dishonourable way; and though, notwithstanding the frequent instances I have seen of them, I would still hope that such instances and such characters are not common, yet the fact of these men, and such as these, being received into society, is a proof of that extreme laxity of morals, that want of high feelings of honour, and that lamentable toleration of vice, which I have already noticed. In England, after such conduct, would men be received into society at all, or, indeed, could England produce men of birth and family capable of such conduct?

I know some Italian noblemen, however, incapable of a dishonourable action, and perfect gentlemen, both in manners and mind; but I know very few who are not frivolous and dissipated, to the neglect of private duties and moral restraints.

One great defect in the constitution of society on the continent, is the want of the order of commons, that middle rank which links together by insensible gradations the high and the low, and diffuses propriety, cultivation, and honourable ambition

through all. From the want of this, the privilege of nobility is tenaciously preserved, and injudiciously extended. Every son of a count is also a count, and all his son's sons are counts also. These nobles follow no plebeian profession; the church and the army alone are open to them; there is no navy; commerce, the source of the modern greatness of Italy, is extinct, or, at least, what remains is generally carried on by foreigners, never by native nobles. Bankers sometimes become noblemen, but noblemen seldom become bankers. Still, the bankers in Italy are generally elevated a degree above the bourgeois,—not, however, in morals. They are quite as ready to cheat, both in a large and small way, as any class of Italians; not only in the rates of exchange, &c., but in the very postage of your letters. There are more foreign than Italian banking-houses in Italy, but the same remark, I am sorry to say, applies in a greater or less degree to all with whom either myself or any of my friends have had any dealings.

Medicine is not considered the profession of a gentleman, and is most injudiciously despised; for common sense would surely dictate that to those to whom we entrust our life and health, we should give every advantage of education, character, and respectability; and not choose for such an office, men of low birth, limited means, and dubious reputation. In small towns, the physician is chosen by the corporation, from whom he receives a small salary, and his patients pay him nothing; though it is customary to send him a small annual present. If discon

tented with their own, they are at full liberty to have the physician of any neighbouring town, whom then they must remunerate; and as there is a hope of such employments, and of being chosen to fill a more lucrative situation, or *condotta*, as it is called, the spur of interest is not wanting. In capitals, of course, every practitioner sets up for himself, and all have a train of young pupils, who, like Gil Blas and Doctor Sangrado, are taught to kill according to their master's receipt; and in due season these Tyros are generally elected physicians to country places,—or go *in condotta*, as they call it,—unless they choose to remain in the metropolis. I do not mean to say that there are not men of great medical skill and science in Italy, but—I speak from the information of better judges than myself, —the general standard is far below that of England, nor is the profession at all pursued by the first classes.

Law is much more respected, and consequently more respectable, than medicine. Every small town always elects its Podestà, who is changed triennally, lest he should imbibe partialities.

Thus debarred by custom from useful and respectable professions, the younger sons, and the whole numerous race of poor nobles in Italy, have often recourse for subsistence to a state of the most humiliating servility and dependence,—to fawning, flattery, and *cavalieri serventi-ship*,—and to arts and employments, I am afraid, even worse than these.

There is a lamentable want of true dignity and

of proper pride among the Italian nobles. They will not practise useful employments; but too often stoop to base actions. Counts, in full dress, often come to you a-begging; and Marchesa's, with lace veils and splendid necklaces, will thankfully accept half-a-crown. A woman, dressed very expensively, begged of us the other day in the streets, and we have had several visits from men of rank, soliciting charity. It may be said of them, that "they cannot dig, but to beg they are *not* ashamed."

Generally speaking, the fair Italians are certainly not women of cultivated minds, or fine accomplishments. They are occupied with pursuits of the most puerile vanity; they carry their passion for dress to the most ruinous extravagance, and are victims of languor, indolence, and ennui. The Neapolitan ladies are more addicted to gambling than the Romans; though there are some here entirely given up to it, and on whose countenances I read, at the nightly faro table, the deadly passion of their souls.

The Italian ladies scarcely ever nurse their children, or attend to their education. The boys are instructed at home by some domestic chaplain, or placed in public seminaries. The girls are brought up at home; but under no proper governesses; their mothers are seldom qualified, and still more rarely disposed, to fulfil the office; or they are educated in convents by nuns, who are too often ignorant, prejudiced, and bigotted, and, perhaps, less fitted for the important task of forming the fe-

male character, than any other class of women: They escape from this gloomy prison to the world, without having formed a taste for any rational pursuits or domestic pleasures; are married to some man chosen for them by their parents, and to whom they must consequently be indifferent;—and what better can be expected from them?

The exclusion of young unmarried women from society in this country, deprives it of one of its greatest charms. I am ready, indeed, to own, that too many young ladies, *just come out*, weigh at times somewhat heavily on a party in our own country; but conceive what a blank the absence of the whole would make, and you will better understand the variety, and interest, and animation they give to it!

Though the fair sex in this country are generally extremely ignorant, there are certainly many very learned women in Italy; so learned, that here, where there is no literary Salic law, the chairs in the universities have often, both in past and present times, been filled by female professors. Signora Tambroni, late Professor of Greek, in the University of Bologna, only died within these few months, though she retired from her situation a few years ago; nor was she less remarkable for her piety and excellence, than for her uncommon attainments.

With a few bright exceptions, however, it unfortunately happens that the class of literary women in Italy, are too *violently* literary. The blues are too deep a blue. They are either wholly unlearned, or overpoweringly learned. A taste for li-

terature is not generally diffused and intermingled with other pursuits and pleasures, as in England; it is confined to a few, and reigns in them without controul. Neither does the love of letters, exclude the love of adulation. Their vanity is of a different cast, but not less insatiable than that of the other fair Italians. They entertain you too much with talking of their books, or repeating their own compositions; and their houses are generally infested with a herd of male scribblers, who make large demands on the patience and applause of their auditors, by reading or reciting their various works in verse or prose, and be-praise each other, that they may be praised themselves.

I have spoken, somewhat too much at length, perhaps, on the character of the higher classes; and I am sorry I cannot say much for the morals of the middle and lower ranks, among whom truth, honesty, and industry, are rare and little prized. They will cheat if they can, and they sometimes take more pains to accomplish this, than would have enabled them to gain far more by fair dealing. When detected in falsehood and imposition, they shew a wonderful degree of coolness and carelessness. I have met with honest and excellent Italians in all ranks; but I must say, knavery, meanness, and profligacy, are far more common.

Their indolence, however, is, to an Englishman, the most extraordinary feature of their character. I have frequently, in asking for goods at a shop in Rome, been answered with a drawling "*non c'e*," even when I saw them before my eyes; and once

was actually told they were too high to reach! Nay, a shoemaker, after getting through the labour of taking my measure, resigned my future custom, rather than send the shoes home at the distance of two streets. Another, three months ago, agreed to make me two pair, and still continues to promise them "next week."

The women of these classes are indolent, useless, and vain. They never seem employed about domestic cares; in fact, the small matter of cleaning, which is bestowed upon a house, is generally done by men. It is they who make the beds, and dust out the rooms. They cook; they milk; and sometimes even make gowns. I never shall forget my astonishment at Naples, on sending for a dress-maker, when a man appeared; but he professed his capacity for the undertaking. I was in haste, and he sat down in company with my maid, and finished me a very superb ball-dress before night.

In Rome, however, I think the dress-makers, and all the washer-women, are of the female gender. But the Roman females are really generally a useless indolent set. Slovenly and dirty in their persons and dress at home, and tawdrily fine when they go abroad. Their virtue, I fear, cannot be much boasted of, and, like their superiors, few of them are without their lovers and their intrigues. I know the handsome wife of a substantial shopkeeper, who, with the consent of her husband, has been the mistress of three successive noblemen, Italian and foreign, and lived with them. The last sent her back in disgrace, on discovering, that even

in his house, she had contrived to receive her own favoured lover. The husband took her back, and they are now living together.

Another tradesman makes over his wife at this moment to a nobleman, for a certain annual compensation, and yet these men do not seem to be despised for it. These facts I *know* to be true, beyond the possibility of doubt; and in spite of their grossness, I mention them, because you cannot otherwise conceive the state of morals in this country.

The celibacy of the clergy is another cause of the want of virtue among the women; for, by the perverse and unnatural institutions of the church, those who ought to be the guardians, are too often in secret the corrupters of morals. They thus strike at the root and bond of all morality; for the virtue of a community will always be found to be in proportion to the chastity of the women.

But I began about the Blessing of the Horses, and I have been led, I know not how, into a long disquisition on the morals and manners of the Italians.

Much more might be said upon them, but the subject is not particularly pleasant, where we find so much to censure, and so little to approve.

LETTER LXXXI.

THE CARNIVAL.

THE Romans, in throwing off the shackles of moral restraint, do not seem to have gained much gaiety or pleasure by their release. Nothing is more striking to a stranger than the sombre air which marks every countenance, from the lowest to the highest, in Rome. The faces even of the young are rarely lighted up with smiles; a laugh is seldom heard, and a merry countenance strikes us with amazement, from its novelty. Rome looks like a city whose inhabitants have passed through the cave of Trophonius. Yet, will it be believed that this serious, this unsmiling people, rush into the sports of the Carnival with a passionate eagerness far surpassing all the rest of the Italians? They are madly fond of this Catholic Saturnalia; and, by a strange annual metamorphosis, from the most grave and solemn, suddenly become the most wild and extravagant people in the creation. It seems as if some sudden delirium had seized them. All ranks, classes, ages, and sexes,—under the

same intoxication of spirits, parade the streets. The poor starve, work, pawn, beg, borrow, steal, —do any thing to procure a mask and a dress; and when the bell of the Capitol, after mid-day, gives licence to the reign of folly to commence, the most ridiculous figures issue forth,—wild for their favourite diversion. Characters they can scarcely be called,—since there is no attempt at supporting, or even looking them,—either in the Corso in the morning, or the Festino (the Masked Ball) in the evening. Their only aim is to dress themselves, and "to fool it to the top of their bent," and they do both to admiration. They assume rich, picturesque, grotesque, or buffoon costumes, according as it is their object to excite admiration, laughter, or love. They may assume any disguise but what is connected with religion or government. They may neither be cardinals, priests, nuns, pilgrims, hermits, friars, magistrates, or ministers. In general, the motley multitude is made up of indescribable monsters; but Punch and Harlequin abound. Pantaloon is a prime favourite. The Doctor of Bologna is a great man; and *Pagliataccio*, a sort of clown or fool, dressed all in white, even to the mask, is the most popular of all. Turks, Jews, bakers, cooks, and Cameriere, are common. The female costumes of the Italian peasantry,—especially of the vicinity,—imitated in gay spangled materials, are the favourite dresses of the young women. Some, however, go as Jewesses, because then they may accost whom they please, without any breach of decorum. Many, of both sexes, are dressed en-

tirely in white, even to the masks, with shepherd's hats; many in black dominos, their heads covered with a black silk hood, which is a complete disguise; and many,—perhaps the majority,—wear no mask at all, but appear in gay dresses. The proportion of masks, here, however, is far greater than at Naples. When a carriage contains masks, the servants, and sometimes the horses, are often masked also, and the coachman generally appears in the shape of an old woman.

The Carnival is just terminated, and we found it as amusing here as it was stupid last year at Naples and Florence. Even Venice, I hear, has lost her ancient pre-eminence in its diversions; nor is it wonderful that, pining as she is under a mortal atrophy, she should want the spirit for gaiety now. Rome is the place in which it is now seen to the greatest perfection; and for a day or two it is really an amusing scene.

The Carnival, properly speaking, begins after Christmas-day, and ends with the commencement of Lent, and during that period the Opera and Theatres are licensed; but it is only during the last eight days,—allowing for the intervening Fridays and Sunday,—that masking is allowed in the streets. The Corso is the scene of this curious revelry: The windows and balconies are hung with rich draperies, and filled with gaily-dressed spectators. The little raised *trottoirs* by the side, are set out with chairs, which are let, and occupied by rows of masks. The street is, beside, crowded with pedestrians, masked and unmasked; and two rows of carriages, close behind each other, make a conti-

nual promenade. Notwithstanding the crowd, the narrowness of the street, and the multitude of foot-passengers intermixed with the carriages, no accident ever happens; and though a few of the horse-guards are stationed at intervals to preserve order, and prevent the carriages from leaving their line, I never saw any occasion for their interference.

Both the masked and unmasked carry on the war by pelting each other with large handfuls of what ought to be comfits; but these being too costly to be used in such profusion, they are actually nothing more than *pozzolana* covered with plaister, and manufactured for the purpose, under the name of *confitti de' gesso*—(plaister.) This coating flies off into lime-dust, and completely whitens the figures of the combatants; but its pungency sometimes does mischief to the eyes, though otherwise it is quite harmless.

Strangers seldom attack you, but those who know you, as seldom let you escape; and we, being unmasked, and in an open carriage, were generally most unmercifully pelted by masked antagonists. We took care to return the compliment with interest,—abundance of this material, which may be called *the wit* of the masquerade, being on sale, so that you can never be at a loss for a repartee.

Sometimes, indeed, we were assailed by an unexpected volley from some passing pedestrian mask, on whom we could, at the time, inflict no retaliation; but we never failed to mark him as a subject for future retribution, when the course of the promenade brought him again within our reach.

It often happens, in the many stops of the carriages, that two in the opposite lines begin the assault, and quantities of ammunition being poured in, a furious pitched battle is carried on, until the cavalcade being put in motion again, separates the combatants. We sometimes received a discharge of real comfits; but they came "like angel visits, few, and far between."

Half a dozen masks were often hanging together on the back of our carriage, chattering to us in all languages; and in many of them we recognized our English or foreign acquaintance. But the Italians communicate with each other less by words than signs. It is wonderful with what rapidity and facility they can carry on this intercourse, at any visible distance; and they thus converse through the medium of the eye, not the ear. Whether this custom originated in that ancient jealousy which secluded Italian women so rigorously from society,—or in that inquisitorial government which still renders freedom of speech dangerous,—I shall not enquire; but it struck me, that though at all times much in use amongst all classes, it is still more practised during the Carnival than at any other period. Every day of the masquerade the Corso becomes more crowded, or more animated, till, on the last, the number and spirit of the masks,—the skirmishes of sweet-meats and lime-dust,—and the shouts and ecstacies of all,—surpass description.

The whole ends by *putting out* the Carnival. Just before dark, all the masks appear with a lighted taper, labouring to blow out their neighbour's

candle, and keep in their own. I can easily believe that you cannot conceive the fun of this, unless you were in the midst of it; but, ridiculous as it may appear, I assure you we laughed ourselves merry at this absurd scene; and that *truly great* philosopher, Mr——, nearly went into convulsions. I am told the masking during the Carnival used to be far more splendid in former times than it now is,—that eastern monarchs, followed by their Ethiopian slaves; cars of victory, with laurel-crowned heroes; Roman processions; and the triumph of Bacchus, surrounded by Silenus and all his crew of drunken Fauns and possessed Bacchantes, used to parade the Corso. But nothing so classically magnificent is now to be seen. On the last day, indeed, this year, one large car attracted every body's attention: It was covered with tapestry, and adorned with immense branches of laurel, amongst which were seated eight or ten black dominos, or demons, who, sheltered by their own evergreens from the pelting of the pitiless storm, dealt their fury mercilessly round in showers of rattling hail.

Every day of the masquerade there is a race run by small spirited horses, without riders. Their impetuosity in the race, however, is not so much owing to their natural spirit, as to the agony of the goads, or balls, covered with sharp spikes of metal, suspended from their backs, which, at every motion, fall heavily upon the same spot, making large raw gory circles over their bodies, horrible to behold. Sometimes six or eight of these goads are beating

their bleeding sides at once, and as if this were not torment enough, fire is likewise applied to them, so that the poor animals, furious under these tortures, often cannot be restrained by the force of eight or ten men, from leaping the cords which confine them at the entrance of the Corso. At the discharge of a cannon, this barrier is withdrawn, and the whole competitors fly off at full speed. The course, which is along the Corso, and consequently paved, is about a mile in length, and the horses are stopped by a piece of cloth which is suspended across the street, near the Venetian Palace, at the *Ripresa de' Barberi*, so called from Barbary horses being the original racers.

A little spirited English horse, never meant, however, for a racer, won almost all the prizes, or *palij*, this year. They consist of a rich piece of velvet, furnished at the cost of the Jews, who were formerly compelled to run foot-races themselves, which afforded much diversion to the Christian populace. It often happens that some of the horses run aside down other streets; and once I remember the people waited for the race in vain,—the whole of the steeds having gone off together towards St Peter's. I was not one of the disappointed; having previously witnessed the races twice, I was ever afterwards glad to get out of the way. To see these noble animals thus wantonly tortured and infuriated by pain, is any thing but a pleasing or humane spectacle, and one I most certainly never wish to see again.

Priests are forbidden to join in these revels; but

who may be present under the mask, I suppose would puzzle even the Pope's infallibility to find out. Occasionally, however, some curious discoveries have been made by chance. In a late Carnival, the horses in a hack carriage, containing two masks, becoming restive, ran off at full speed, threw the coachman from his box, and never stopped till they overturned the vehicle, near the Ponte San Angelo. Both the masks seemed to be severely hurt. The female, who loudly bewailed her sufferings, proved to be a noted lady of no very fair fame; but her male companion, though the blood from his wounded head trickled down his dress, resolutely held on his mask, refused to speak, and though unable to walk, endeavoured to escape from the crowd that wanted to assist him. At length his mask was taken off by force; and he proved to be a Cardinal, whose name I refrain from mentioning.

There are only three Festini, or public masked balls, allowed during the Carnival. They are held in the Teatro Alberto, a large handsome *sala*, now only used for this purpose. The stage and pit are open to the masks, and dancing of quadrilles, &c. goes on with much decorum, though I need hardly observe, that none above Roturier rank ever participate in this part of the amusement. The price of admittance is about one shilling and sixpence English, and you may guess that the company is not very select, when I tell you that our Italian servants were there. Yet nothing ever appears which could offend the most fastidious delicacy. The higher orders have boxes, and are ge-

nerally unmasked; but, in the course of the night, they often walk about among the people, and mix with the motley crew, without ever meeting any impertinence, or unpleasant adventure.

There is no attempt whatever at supporting characters, and none indeed are assumed. They have no idea of those character masks, which we consider the very essence of a masquerade. The masks are dressed whimsically, grotesquely, laughably, and sometimes tastefully; but they are mere dresses, and they speak in a false squeaking tone, to perplex each other—interchange compliments, or banters, and chatter abundance of nonsense,—but not in character; no doubt, a great deal of intrigue may go on, but nothing of it is seen, nor is there much time for it, for the Festino begins at eight, and at twelve every body is turned out, and the lights extinguished. The only attempt at characters was made by a few Englishmen, who supported their parts admirably, in our style. One, in particular, a Grub-street poet, was excellent; but his ballads, pinned about his hat, his elegies, sonnets, and odes, offered to all,—his heroic recitations,—his own ecstacies at their beauty, and his tattered and beggarly attire, seriously persuaded some of the Italians,—to our infinite entertainment, —that he was a poor mad Englishman, in good earnest; and they expressed for him the most unfeigned compassion.

I must end my account of the Carnival with what I ought to have commenced it, by telling you that its amusements are uniformly ushered in by

a public execution. If any criminals are destined to condign punishment, they are reserved for this occasion; and I suppose it never happened that some head was not laid on the block at this festive period. Three were guillotined this year. It is done with a view to restrain the people, by the immediate terrors of the example, from the commission of crimes, to which the licence of the season may be supposed to lead. A number of penitents attended these unhappy criminals to the scaffold, as well as the pious brotherhood, who make this their peculiar duty; and both before and after the execution, they begged alms to say masses for their souls, to which hundreds, even of the very poorest of the people, contributed their mite. These processions of penitents, even during the Carnival, make at times a pious, instead of a profane masquerade. Dressed in long robes of sackcloth, girt with ropes, their heads and faces covered with hoods, and their eyes alone appearing through holes cut for them, they parade the streets, and prostrate themselves before the altar in prayer that the sins committed during this lawless season may be forgiven. I am told, but cannot vouch for the fact, that some of the gayest and most licentious masks on the Corso make this preparation for the sins they intend to commit, and perform subsequent penance again during Lent, in expiation of the score they have run up.

The Carnival, in its licence, its mirth, and its levelling of rank,—nay even in its season,—bears an obvious resemblance to the Roman Saturnalia.

But it perhaps approaches still more closely to the annual feast of Cybele,* when, according to Livy,† the richest draperies were hung from the windows, masquerading took place in the streets, and every one, disguising himself as he pleased, walked about the city in jest and buffoonery. This is precisely a modern Carnival.

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* The Galli, or priests of this goddess, seem to bear a curious resemblance to some of our religious orders. They were mendicants, and under the obligation of perpetual celibacy; in short, begging friars.

† Livy, lib. xxix. c. 14. It took place on the 27th March, when the simulacrum, or image of the goddess that fell from heaven, was washed in the Almo.

LETTER LXXXII.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

Rome, March 27th, 1818.

I CAME to Italy expecting to find it the land of song, to hear music wafted in every gale, and every valley vocal with harmony. Great has been my disappointment. I have not only heard very little good music, but very little music at all. During the whole course of the eighteen months that have now nearly elapsed since I first set foot in Italy, during all my travels through the country, and my residence in the towns, the sound of music has seldom met my ear unsought. I find it, indeed, as in all great cities, in public theatres, in crowded assemblies, and stately drawing-rooms; but it is not the spontaneous "voice of the people."

In their constantly recurring *Festas*, when the streets are thronged day after day with a listless loitering crowd, the sound of music is seldom or never heard. It does not beguile these long days of idleness, nor, as among the Spaniards, the Portu-

gueze, and the Germans, is it resorted to after the hours of labour, to charm away their evening cares. Even the artisan, plying his daily task, and "the spinners in the sun," as they sit at their doors, twirling the slow thread on the distaff and spindle, are never heard singing at their work.

The first music that saluted me at Rome, and that was after I had lived nearly a month in it, was the bagpipe.

I was awakened one night from a feverish slumber, by the well-known drone of that mellifluous instrument. I imagined, that being in a fever, I was also in a delirium; but it was by no means an ecstatic delusion, and these real, or imaginary national tones, were so far from proving a regale to my ungratified ears, that when a second bagpipe set up its throat, and a third joined in the droning chorus, I thought I should have gone distracted.

The next night the same horrible disturbance was repeated, and now convinced it was only too real, I found, upon making inquiry, that numbers of *Zampognari*, or *Piferari*, as these bagpipers are called, annually come up from Campania before Christmas, to play hymns upon their bagpipes to the Virgin, who, if she has any ear for music, must be nearly deafened with this piece of their courtesy.

The serenades that had broken my rest, I found were addressed to a Madonna, immediately below my bed-room windows, and for many a night, or, as they call it, morning, (about four o'clock,) did these pious pipers continue to drone out their

strains to this stony image, whose deafness and insensibility I was tempted to envy.

The bag-pipe, as my more travelled friends tell me, is a very classical instrument, and extends not only over Italy, but throughout Greece, and is supposed to be one of the most ancient musical—(query, unmusical?)—instruments in the world. I can only say, that if "Music, heavenly Maid!" played upon it

> ——— "when she was young,
> And first in early Greece she sung,"

I cannot enter into the poet's regret at not having heard her; but, on the contrary, am perfectly satisfied

> "With all that charms this laggard age;"

to wit—the strains she gives us now she has grown old.

Some wandering harpers from the south of Italy, too, sometimes visit Rome. Their music is simple, very peculiar, perhaps very ancient, and certainly very sweet. They are called Carciofolari. Excepting these itinerant musicians, and one old blind man, who is stationary, I have heard no street music in Rome, and very little in any town, village, or hamlet of Italy, in which it has been my lot to sojourn; excepting Naples and Venice. There the voice of music is continually heard at evening, over the calm waters of the Bay of Naples, and the Canals of the Adriatic,—on the Chiaja, and the

Piazza di San Marco. The favourite instrument in both places is the guitar, or viola,—an excellent accompaniment for the voice. When I was at Naples, *Ricciordello Antonio*, a beautiful playful little air, was the most popular among the Lazzaroni; and at Venice, "*Buona notte, Amato bene*," met me at every corner; both sung with a spirit and gaiety that gave them an inexpressible charm.

One thing, indeed, I must remark, that wherever one *does* hear music in Italy, it is really music—(excepting the bagpipes)—something deserving of the name.

One's ear is never tortured with the horrible tunes, executed in a still more horrible style, with which it is continually assailed in England, not only in the streets, but in theatres and drawing-rooms. But the fact is, music with us is an exotic, and the plant has a sickly and artificial existence. In the great hot-bed of London alone, it comes to any perfection, and there, though fine, it is forced.

If Italy bears away the palm in vocal excellence, Germany far surpasses it in instrumental music, in the refined and universal taste, or rather passion, for music, diffused among all classes, and in the excellence both of the composition and execution. There you may hear the compositions of Mozart, and Haydn, and Beethoven, in the dwelling of every artizan; but in Italy, her own immortal masters are neglected and forgotten, or heard now only in other lands.

Rossini carries all before him, and far be it from me to join in the senseless outcry which has been

raised against him by some of our own amateurs here. I neither think, with some of his own countrymen, that all he has written is perfection, nor with many of ours, that none of it is bearable. I cannot conceive that *he* can have any soul for music, who does not feel the exquisite beauty of some of the parts of Tancred and Othello, of the Italian in Algiers, the Barber of Seville, and of many other of his works. At the same time, the poor drudge compelled to labour at the bidding of his masters, not at the suggestion of his genius, and forced to manufacture music by the hour and the line, cannot always produce works of equal excellence. Considering the early years of Rossini and the immense quantity of music he has already written, I think it is wonderful there is so little that is bad, and so much that is beautiful. Still, though I would not have heard less of his works, I could have wished to have heard more of my old favourites, Cimarosa and Paësiello,—to say nothing of one superior to all Italian masters,—I need not say I mean Mozart,—whose exquisite compositions I have literally never heard at all in this land of harmony.

The higher orders have not quite the same strong general passion for music that I expected. It forms no part of the entertainment in their conversaziones, except when a rare *accademia* renders it the sole purpose of the meeting. Indeed, it seems less generally than with us a source of domestic amusement; but I am not sure that this is to be regretted: It may perhaps be doubted, whe-

ther the invaluable years of *every* young English lady's life that are devoted to the attainment of a certain degree of expertness in running over the keys of a piano-forte, might not,—where there is no natural taste for it,—be better employed.

In Italy, though every lady of a certain rank is not a musician, there are many who sing and play with a taste and science worthy of a first-rate professional performer. In the other sex, there are still more examples of this, though it is said to be less common now than in former times. Italian noblemen may still be found fiddling all night for their amusement in an orchestra; but these things are, comparatively speaking, rare.

There is a weekly Accademia of music given at Rome, by a man who made a fortune by selling fiddle-strings. Notwithstanding his plebeian origin, his concerts are attended by most of the Roman nobility, by foreign ambassadors, and royal princes. The performers are, for the most part, amateurs, and some of them very good; but who does not see, that though the company at large loudly applaud the performance, and cry, "How charming! how divine!" their whole souls are intent upon the looks, dress, flirtations, and admirations of each other,—upon bowing, smiling, coquetting, manœuvering,—upon any thing, in short, but the music; and that, though the ostensible, it is not the real source of attraction?

Rome has the worst Opera in Italy, but the best sacred music in the world. In all the churches, the festas of the saints to whom they are dedicated,

are annually celebrated, with a grand sacred concert of vocal and instrumental music, by a band of professional performers; and, on these occasions—in the Jesuits Church at the close of the old, and commencement of the new year—in the Chapel of the Choir at St Peter's on the Sunday evenings during Lent and Advent—and more particularly in the three Grand Misereres of the Holy Week, and the Accademias of sacred music given at that time in private houses,—the music is indeed of unrivalled excellence, and fraught with a lofty sublimity and pathos, to which nothing I ever heard elsewhere, even approximates. Yet it is strange, that with such heavenly harmony at command, the ordinary church music should be absolutely bad; indeed, scarcely deserving the name.

In the chapel of a convent on the Quirinal Hill, called, I think, the Church, or Chapel of Santa Anna, the singing of the nuns, at vespers, is singularly touching. In this chapel there is the perpetual exposition of the Host; and, in consequence, it is perpetually illuminated, night and day, with wax tapers. I have never entered it without finding it filled with people, all on their knees on the marble floor, and a silence so profound reigning through it, that every half-stifled sigh of penitence that broke from them, reached the ear. Every being there seemed as unconscious of the presence of those with whom he was in contact, as if in a desert. No doubt, the awful stillness that prevailed amidst this crowd of people, and the unnatural glare of the illumination within, when all without

was bright in day, had their influence in giving effect to the full harmonious voices of the invisible inmates of the cloister, whom men might see no more. But so powerful was the pathos of their choral strain, that it affected many, "albeit unused to the melting mood," even to tears.

The romantic custom of serenades is still very generally practised among the middling and lower classes. On a moonlight evening, the lover conducts a little band of hired musicians below the windows of his mistress, and while they pour forth the melting strains of melody, he stands to watch her appearance, to breathe forth his sighs, or, by mute signs, implore her pity. Her name is echoed in the songs, which are sometimes really composed, and are always supposed to be so, by him. A fair Italian, who lives a few doors from us, has been serenaded almost every night this week, by her enamoured swain.

The Opera at Rome, I understand, is always bad, but this winter it is intolerable. The instrumental and vocal parts seem to contend in rivalry of wretchedness. Rossini's beautiful *Tancredi*, has been mercilessly murdered all winter; still the boxes of the Argentina are as crowded with the beauty and fashion of Rome, as if the music were of the first description. Nor can it, as at Paris, be the dancing which forms the attraction; for nothing can be so wretched as the ballêt, both here and at the Valle, which, like the little Fiorentini of Naples, is a melange of the Opera and the Theatre. The acting is scarcely a degree better

than the music, yet some of the farces and buffooneries have been amusing. I Ciarlattani,—a farce I saw the other night, was irresistibly laughable, and well played. I have not yet seen any of the very few good comedies of Goldoni, but I have yawned through several representations of his tedious and trifling colloquies of five acts, without incident, interest, character, or vis comica. He really seems to think that the common occurrences of a domestic day, such as drinking a cup of chocolate, sitting down to dinner, scolding the servants, or spoiling the children, are sufficient materials for a drama. One would wonder that any author could ever have written such trash, or that any audience could have listened to it; still more, that any body that has ever written any thing so good as a few of his well-known pieces, should have produced so much that is so very bad as nine-tenths of his puerile trash, misnamed comedies. The Burbero Benefico, which is perhaps the best of them, was written after a long and diligent study of the French comedy, which it resembles, without equalling; and though it may be a very curious circumstance that he wrote it originally in French, it cannot make it a better play. He has occasionally traits of coarse humour and of character, but never of genuine wit or genius; and every thing he ever wrote is tinctured with gross vulgarity, and betrays his extraordinary ignorance, as well as the limited scope of his ideas. Even in the best of his productions, there is a deplorable want of life and interest, and plot and wit. The three wearisome

plays upon Richardson's Pamela, though great favourites with the Italians,—whose dramatic personifications give as false an idea of the English character, as ours of theirs,—are a proof how rarely authors succeed in painting the manners and characters of any nation except their own.

In seizing those of his own gay Venetians, Goldoni has been far more happy, and perhaps, upon the whole, some, of the whole host of plays he wrote in that sweet *patois*, are superior to all those in what he is pleased to call—the Lingua Toscana. My acquaintance with his four-and-forty volumes of comedies, however, is by no means universal, and has been a good deal impeded by an unlucky habit of falling asleep over them.

Goldoni wrote sixteen bad comedies in one year; it would be better if he had written one good one in sixteen years. He may more properly be called a play-monger than a comic poet. I have never been where any of Alfieri's tragedies,—or indeed any tragedy at all,—was performed, nor is it likely I should; for Alfieri is much talked of, but little read, and scarcely ever acted. All of them, except four, were prohibited by the French, from political motives, nor is it likely that the interdict will be taken off by the present governments. The loss is the less, because they are confessedly ill adapted to the stage; and such being the case, they may be fine poems, but cannot be considered fine plays.

It may seem strange to assert, that Alfieri's plays want dramatic merit; yet they are deficient in plot,

action, interest, incident, and passion—and most of all—in nature. High heroic deeds are performed, but it is by fictitious beings. Alfieri has cast men in moulds of his own, and turned them out for us to look at; he has not penetrated into the deep recesses of the human heart, like our own Shakespeare, and drawn them from what he found there; and consequently he never touches our feelings.

Italy must yield to England, France, and even to Spain, both in tragedy and comedy. I do not speak of the German theatre, because I cannot judge of it in the original, therefore not at all. Italy was the first seat of modern dramatic performances. Long before any other of the nations of Europe had a stage, hundreds of tragedies and comedies were represented here. But what were these *commedie antiche?*—Dry, lifeless imitations of the Grecian and Roman dramatists, tolerated at first, with difficulty, even by the learned, never endured by the body of the people, and long since consigned to dust and utter oblivion. In fact, paradoxical as it may seem, the true legitimate drama of life and nature is not the natural growth of Italy. —The Opera and the Pantomine, Harlequin and Punchinello, Music and *Buffa* are indigenous, and flourish in full perfection. But the Theatre is every where secondary to the Opera. While the very names and memories of the singers of Italy are re-echoed with rapture in every country, there are not, nor ever have been, any actors of great popular fame, —not at least in the regular drama; for in the old native Commedie del Arte,—which Goldoni labour-

ed so hard to banish,—while his best works, after all, are formed upon its model—they were excellent in their way. In these, nothing was written,—the dialogue was entirely left to the extempore wit of the performers, who had only for a guide the dry bare skeleton,—the *scenario*, as they called it,—of the play; which was previously planned, and stuck up behind the scenes; but they filled up the sketch *al'improviso* with their own colouring; their merry dialogue, their smart repartee, their practical jokes, their buffoonery and grimace.* Thus they were at the same moment authors and actors. Their characters, to be sure, were all established. There was the old Venetian Pantaloon, the Doctor of Bologna, the Neapolitan Pollicinello, (Punch,) the Bergamasque Arlecchino, (Harlequin,) the Calabrian Clown, (Giangurgolo, or Coriello,) the Ferrarese Rogue, (Brighella,) the Coxcomb of Rome, (Gelsomino,) and the Simpleton of Milan, whose established name I have forgotten.

All these wore masks. Besides which, there were the lovers, (Gl' Innamorati,) in every play, who were sentimental, and were not masked, and spoke in *lingua Toscana*. It was observed to me, by an ingenious Italian, that the extempore nature of these pieces,—the acting in masks, and the

* Grimaldi may serve as a specimen of them, though all his *buffa* powers are by no means called forth in our regular set pantomines; yet his very contortions and evolutions have such irresistible comicality in them, that he contrives to make that amusing which was before insufferable.

whole style of the performance, including, I fear, its licentiousness,—seemed to prove the Commedia del' Arte to be the legitimate descendant of the ancient *Atellanæ*. I confess I should be sorry to see any thing so truly national, and so highly ingenious, banished Italy altogether; but it is certainly in the wane. The higher orders learn from foreigners to decry and discountenance it, and the lower orders have little voice here.

The Italians shew a good deal of the same talent in the management of the *Burattini*,—the acting puppets,—which are as much superior to the Marionettes of France, as a pantomine to a puppet-show. They are so admirably managed, that one continually forgets they are not real men and women; and their dialogues have all the air of proceeding from their own mouths. I have certainly, hitherto, met with no actors here to compare to those of wood, and I shall not soon forget the diversion I experienced the other night from their performance. They first represented a most laughable little comedy: This was followed by a melo-drama taken from Ariosto, and full of enchantments. The magic mirror, the flying horse, the brazen palace, the Ogre, Astolfo's journey to the moon, Bradamante's prowess, &c., &c., were formed into a connected plot of adventure and romance, terminating in Bradamante's marriage with Ruggiero. The last piece was still more classical: It was the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, *travestied*. Orpheus himself, fiddling, in a huge bag-wig and an old-fashioned court-dress, and all

his adventures in hell, and out of it, were inexpressibly laughable. By far the best Burratini are at Rome: the next in merit are at Milan. The best Operas are at Milan and Naples; their greater population and consequence, as well as the splendour and magnitude of the Sala in both places, will probably long enable them to support this superiority. The world can produce no theatres to rival La Scala at Milan, and San Carlo at Naples. The latter is superior in freshness of decoration, but perhaps the other is quite as noble in architecture. La Fabre, Bellochi, and Signor Galli, at Milan; and Colbrann, Chabran, and Canonici, at Naples, are by far the finest singers I have heard in this country,—indeed, almost the only fine ones,—for the first-rate performers of Italy are certainly to be found abroad, rather than at home. The superior emolument which London, and indeed every other capital offers, charms away her native Syrens. The low prices of entrance throughout Italy, (the highest for the pit being, I think, about twenty-pence of English money, and a whole box often hired for the night, even during the Carnival, for five shillings,) render the salaries of the performers necessarily low. I have, however, sometimes heard, in very unpromising places, a very delightful musical treat. Almost every little town has its opera during some part of the year, and this certainly is a strong proof of a universal passion for music among the people. It would be still stronger, however, if they attended to the music; but I must say, I never was so

much disturbed in the box of any woman of fashion at London, as in those of my Italian friends at Milan and Naples, which are reputed, and I think justly,—to be the most musical places in Italy. In fact, the Italians go to the Opera for society, and the night is spent in paying visits from one box to another, and in incessant chattering. The continual repetition of the same opera during the whole season, is perhaps one great cause of this. I observed, on the only first representation I ever witnessed, that the utmost silence and attention prevailed till the piece was concluded.

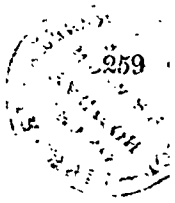
In fine, I must end as I have begun, by acknowledging myself disappointed in the music of Italy, —disappointed in the quantity, disappointed in the quality, and disappointed in the execution. I expected from it (and who would not?) pre-eminent excellence; but I have heard finer music, both vocal and instrumental, at the Opera, and the Phil-Harmonic, in London; and in most of the great, and many of the little towns in Germany, than I have ever heard in any part of Italy. I speak now of cultivated music,—of the music of courts, and operas and concerts. In the untutored music of the people, I am sure there is nothing, among the whole *contadini* of Italy, to compare to the singing of the peasant girls of Unterseen, Brientz, and many parts of German Switzerland, and Germany.

The true Italian connoisseurs, indeed, say that music, and musical taste, have woefully degenerated in this country, and I cannot but believe them.

Indeed, though such complaints seldom meet with much attention, and are always ascribed to a querulousness that is dissatisfied with the present, I am inclined to believe that they are generally founded on truth. Nobody thinks of saying that taste for literature has declined among the English, or taste for political discussion among the French, or taste for revolution among the Germans,—for these things have of late greatly and manifestly increased; and so many people would not say that musical taste had declined in Italy,—nor should we see so many appearances of it,—if it were not true.

But even if this be the case, Italy is still the second musical country in the world; it must at least rank after Germany. In England, as I before observed, we have music, as we have grapes in our hot-houses; but the produce is, after all, forced and scanty, and entirely confined to the rich and the great, who often taste, without enjoying it; and unless we bestowed much labour and expence upon it, we should never raise any at all. The English are not naturally a musical people. Neither in France, nor in French Switzerland,—in Holland, nor in Belgium,—in Great Britain, nor in Ireland,—have I ever heard any thing that deserves to be called music; for the simple national melodies of my own country, whose beauty and pathos I feel with all the soul of a native, are not that true superior scientific music, that men of cultivated taste, from every part of the world, will equally admire and relish.

Perhaps such music is pretty much confined to Germany and Italy; and perhaps the thing that is most remote from it, is that class of productions in England and France which those countries are pleased to denominate music.



LETTER LXXXIII.

IMPROVISATORI.—ACCADEMIE.

I HAVE heard one of the most extraordinary Improvisatori that I suppose ever appeared, even in Italy. For four or five successive hours, he continues to pour forth a flood of unpremeditated verse, without the smallest hesitation, or apparent effort, and with far more ease than any of us could, after hard labour, recite a composition by rote. But this is not the wonder: This prodigy can compose entire *extempore* tragedies, on any given subject, with all the plot, incidents, and dramatis personæ,—repeat all the parts himself, and bring the whole to a regular denouement, with as much ease as you and I would carry on a common conversation.

I assure you that I do not exaggerate. No words can do justice to the perfect ease, the energy, and unhesitating flow of verse, in which he poured forth this long,—and, in some respects, fine tragedy,—

for there were scenes and passages in it, that not only possessed real poetic beauty, and the warm irresistible eloquence of passion; but might have done honour to a drama deliberately finished off in the closet. I, a poor unskilled foreigner, you may be sure, would not have the presumption to pronounce so decisively upon its positive merits, though I might be allowed to have an opinion of its comparative ones; since I must be as well qualified to judge of one Italian play as another; but the solemn critics who surrounded me,—with brows bent to frown, and dispositions prepared to condemn,—were themselves carried away into the same extravagant applause, admiration, and astonishment, which possessed me.

That it was really *improvviso*, not a shadow of doubt could exist, even in the minds of the most incredulous, of whom, before I went, I believe I was one. A variety of subjects, proposed by different persons in company, were written down by a man on the stage, sealed, and thrown into a vase, which was shaken by various people among the audience, and the billet was drawn by a gentleman of our acquaintance. On this occasion it proved to be Medea, a subject so hackneyed, that when Signore Tomaso Sgricci,—for that is the name of this extraordinary person,—received it on his entrance, he expressed a wish that another lot might be drawn, both from the difficulty of avoiding an imitation of the great writers who had already treated it, and from having very lately, at Florence, dramatized on the same. The Sala, however, resounded with

cries of " Medea ! Medea !" to the great joy of an Italian gentleman of my acquaintance, behind me; who had heard him on this very theme at Florence, and was curious to see if he would repeat it verbatim. Signore Sgricci bowed, paused a single minute, and then said, that to avoid repetition as much as possible, he would make a different cast of parts: He introduced, as my Florentine friend acknowledged, two new characters,—opened the action in a different part of the story, and neither in a single scene, nor even speech, approached to the tragedy he had composed at Florence. The character of Medea, throughout, was supported with wonderful force and effect; and her invocation to the hellish brood was horribly sublime. The second tragedy, which I heard on another occasion, was a much more novel subject; it was the death of Lucretia, which gave far more scope to his powers; and there were many parts in it which absolutely electrified the house, and drew forth loud and continued *Evvivas* of applause. I should observe, that these tragedies were both in verse *sciolto*, without rhyme; but *improvviso* poems, on any given subject and measure, he can pour forth with the same inconceivable rapidity.

He is a native of Arezzo, (the birth-place of Petrarch,) and the harsh Tuscan accent is very distinguishable in his enunciation. His language, however, is remarkably pure, and its flow and variety are most wonderful.

Signore Sgricci is, as far as I know, the only improvisatore who ever attempted tragedy. Of the tribe who spout forth torrents of poesy on every

possible theme, there is no end. It is, however, far from being my intention to speak of them disparagingly; on the contrary, I think it a wonderful talent, and one which, I believe, is exclusively Italian; for, though I have heard in the evenings of summer, a knot of Portugueze peasants singing *improvviso* to their guitars, (which they call *glossare*) their little *extempore* songs can scarcely be styled poetry; aspiring to no elevation, fancy, or even regularity of metre, but merely stringing together the rhymes into which their euphonious language naturally runs. The genius of the Italian language affords considerable facility to the composition of verse; yet, when that composition is to be on any given subject, without a moment's pause or hesitation, and in the face of an expecting audience, it is amazing that its difficulties can be conquered at all. Few people in our country would find it easy to make a tolerable dissertation in prose, on any given theme, in such a situation; how much more difficult would they find it, when encumbered with the fetters of rhyme and measure! But the Italian improvisatori could make no *extempore* oration in prose on a given theme, and this seems to prove that it is a sort of inspiration, or poetic fervour, that carries them on. They often compose with *rime obligaté*, that is, the rhymes and measure, as well as subject, are assigned them. This, to my great astonishment, one of them assured me, he found even easier than unshackled composition, because the rhymes being chosen, saved him the necessity of searching for them; so that it is plain he adapted the sense to the sound, not the sound to the sense.

It is very common, too, to have a *verso obligato*, a distich taken from any popular poet, assigned them, which they must introduce at the end of every eight-line stanza.

It is scarcely possible that verses so composed should ever be very fine, and sometimes they are very bad; but they are occasionally wonderfully pretty, and adorned with images and allusions which it is amazing they should have been able to conjure up in the moment. But the truth is, they have similes and thoughts ready prepared; they are versed in all the common-place of poetry, have all its hackneyed images at command, and bring in, on all occasions, the gods and goddesses, and muses, as auxiliaries. Still, when themes are given on which these useful personages cannot be brought to their assistance, and on which, from their oddity, they could not be prepared, they sometimes hit off very happily turned verses. I gave *a cat* as a subject one night to a Roman improvisatrice,* who instantly composed some very pretty lines upon it; and *a pen*, upon another occasion, called forth a still more ingenious poem from a gentleman.

By far the most interesting performance of the kind is, when two sing together, or rather against each other, in alternate stanzas; something like the contests in Virgil's Eclogues, or the trials of

* A lady of remarkable talent, who, from diffidence, never would attempt to perform, except in a small circle of her own friends. She is since dead.

skill between ancient bards. The improvisatori, fired by each other's strains, by rivalry, and emulation,—pour out their Strophe, and Antistrophe, with a degree of increasing fervour and animation, that carries away their audience, as well as themselves.

Of the improvisatori of Rome itself, Signore Biondi is, in my opinion, by far the first, and I believe he is almost a solitary example of the published poems of an improvisatore being received with eclat. He, too, with the exception of Signore Sgricci, is the most calm in his action,—the most free from those violent contortions or distortions, which, whether the effect of natural agitation or affected passion, are peculiarly unpleasant to witness. These, indeed, I have invariably observed to be strongest in an inverse ratio to the goodness of the performer; and Sgricci, who confessedly stands at the head of the race, is wholly free of them.

A young Neapolitan improvisatrice, Rosa Taddei, has lately excited great interest at Rome; she is only nineteen, not handsome, but with a countenance full of expression, intelligence, and sensibility. That she is endowed with great natural genius, it would be vain to deny; and though very unequal, her compositions are sometimes lighted up with bursts of beauty, that seem really the effect of inspiration; but it is almost painful to see her, from the violent agitation under which she labours, and the violent physical effort which every line seems to cost her. She is the daughter of a comedian, and has, consequently, enjoyed no advantages of educa-

tion; yet her manners have that natural elegance which results from a mind of genius and sensibility. She is now studying Latin, that universal and rational foundation for a good education here, and is making rapid advances in knowledge of history. With the Italian poets she is already conversant.

I never pitied any one more than this poor girl, at two or three sittings of the *Accademias*. These sapient institutions are confraternities of male and female poets, who elect, and eulogize, and stun each other with their own *lack-a-daisical* sonnets, elegies, and pastorals. There are two grand Accademie in Rome, the Tiburina, which is quite of modern date, and the Arcadia, which is the ancient parent of the whole, and has planted its colonies in every city of Italy: For the Arcadians,—these enraptured swains, who so unweariedly extol the pleasures of rural simplicity, and pastoral innocence, will be sought in vain among peaceful plains or secluded hamlets, or any where, except among the din of popular towns. Every member, on admission, becomes a shepherd, and takes some pastoral name, and receives a grant of some fanciful pastoral estate in the happy regions of Arcadia, where he is supposed to feed his harmless sheep. This pastoral brotherhood holds its meetings in a large hall, adorned with portraits of some of the most famous worthies among its deceased members; among whom, Sir Isaac Newton, and several other great philosophers of our country, *had the honour* to be included. Once a-month,—moved I presume by the influence of the moon,—they assemble to disburden their minds, and rills of nonsense mean-

der from every mouth. I was seduced into one of these assemblages, and sustained the infliction of the incessant recitation of the most wretched rhymes during three mortal hours. Nothing could be much more ridiculous than to hear *an Arcadian*, in the shape of a huge, clumsy, ungainly-looking man, in dirty boots, and a great-coat, called upon by some such absurd name as Il Pastor Corydone, and then to see him get up and begin to repeat some silly ditty about his sheep, or to bewail himself on the cruelty of his *Fillide*. The natural effect followed, and one of these plaintive pastorals was interrupted by the loud snores of a fat Arcadian swain. They convened an extraordinary sitting the other night, in honour of Rosa Taddei, the fair improvisatrice, whom, of course, they have made a shepherdess. She was handed into the crowded Sala, which on this occasion presented not its usual beggarly account of empty benches, but boasted of cardinals, dukes and duchesses, foreign ambassadors,—and Canova, who accompanied us. One after another, they began addressing her, in long Latin and Italian pastorals, and other rigmaroles, in which they made her out to be a star come down from heaven, an amaranthine flower transplanted to earth,—the soul of a Seraph, usually employed in singing in heaven, now come down to perform in this nether world: they said Corilla was a dunce to her; even Sappho herself was outdone: she was a tenth Muse, and beat the other nine all to nothing,—had been nursed upon Olympus, and was Apollo's prime favourite, &c., &c.

She is really modest, and without any affectation

it was easy to see she was extremely discomposed with the absurd hyperboles that were mercilessly addressed to her. After this weary performance, her own begun. The parting of Titus and Berenice,—the address of Moses to the Israelites on the passage of the Red Sea,—(some passages very fine,)—the Fall of Man,—Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise,—the Death of Arria,—the Parting of Venus and Adonis, (by far the best,)—the Battle of Constantine and Maxentius, (not suited to her, and very poor,)—and Calliope, at the Tomb of Homer,—a favourite Italian mode of verse-making, in which the supposed visitor, whether muse or man, pours forth an appropriate strain of lamentation,—these were some of the principal subjects on which she sang with various, but sometimes distinguished success. She is almost the only performer in whom I have ever seen much hesitation. She was frequently obliged to repeat the last line twice, and even thrice. I believe I forgot to tell you that few improvisatori, except Sgricci, ever perform without music, and none ever accompany themselves. They choose a simple, but marked measure, suited to the rhythm they are going to compose in, which is played on the piano-forte by another person; and the cadence, and strong intonation in which they recite, is *nearly* singing.

The utility of the music is not so much to conceal any irregularity in the metre, as to give a certain inspiration to the performer,—to kindle a certain feeling, which it is vain to describe, but which all who are susceptible of the power of music or poesy,

must have felt. The improvisatori seem to have the power, by certain associations, of calling up at will those trains of feeling under which alone they can pour out the unpremeditated strains of lyric song. Several of the Italian improvisatrice, in their raised and inspired moods, pouring forth their unpremeditated strains,—exactly as if possessed,—remind me of all I have heard of the Sybils of old, who, I believe, were nothing more than improvisatrice, except that they spoke and were heard, under the belief of their oracular divine mission.

LETTER LXXXIV.

POETRY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

THERE are few places in which the Latin classics are more generally studied, or understood, than at Rome, nor are the great Italian poets less duly appreciated. There is not a line of Dante, or Tasso, or Petrarch, that is not diligently conned. Yet, in spite of all this studying of poets, there is no poetry. Tides of verse are poured forth in an unceasing flow, but nothing remains. They all pass into the quiet stream of oblivion.

Of all the innumerable living poets of Rome, there is not one whose works I ever yet could read to an end; perhaps, therefore, I am not competent to give an opinion upon their merits; and posterity, I suspect, will not have the means of deciding upon them. It certainly proves a disinterested love of the Muses, that there should be so many of their votaries in a country where a poet must be poor, and where indeed no author can

easily make any money; but these capricious ladies do by no means seem to respond to the passion entertained for them, or bless with their favours their importunate Roman suitors.

If I am not struck with the charms of their verse, I am scarcely more captivated with their prose. Its needless length, its unvaried dulness, and its wearisome verbosity, are inconceivable, except to those who have laboured at it; and these qualities, with few exceptions, are characteristic alike of the old and of the new writers. At least, I can truly say, that, during the two years that have elapsed since I first came to Rome, not a work has passed the press to which their own expressive "*Seccatura!*" does not apply. Why they always think it necessary to involve their meaning, when they have any, in such a cloud of words, is more than I can pretend to explain. Neither do I understand how it happens that men, who, in conversation, are so clever and entertaining, should, in their writings, be so tedious and stupid.

These observations, in some measure, apply not to Rome only, but to the whole of Italy. At the same time, wide is the difference at present between the south and the north of this country. The scale of intellectual gradation may be said to rise regularly with the degrees of latitude, from Naples to Milan. It is there you must look for literature and science. It is there, too, that the last poets of Italy flourished. Perhaps I ought to speak in the present tense, for Pindemonte is still alive, and it would be

ungrateful to pass over one who sang the praise of the beauty, the virtue, and the mental charms and graces of my countrywomen, in strains that ought to live. Passerone's poems, too, possess great merit; but none, in my opinion, are equal to Parini, the Pope of Italy, whose admirable *Giorno*, in its witty strain of satire, may even court a comparison with the Rape of the Lock.

Like Pope, too, he was deformed, and even from childhood a cripple;—and like Burns, this elegant satirist, the idol and the scourge of drawing-rooms, and the bugbear of a court, raised himself from the station of a ploughman, and struggled with poverty and with hardship, cruelly aggravated by a long life of sickness and suffering. He wrote many admirable pieces, but "*Il Giorno*" is by far the best.

With this solitary exception,—and we can scarcely call that a poem of the day, which has been read nearly half a century,—the most popular modern poems in Italy are, at present, translations from the English; and Ossian and the Seasons, are scarcely less admired in the vales of Italy, than among their native Caledonian mountains. Poetic genius, indeed, seems to have taken its flight to our favoured island, and while the name and the lays of Byron, Campbell, Moore, Scott, Crabbe, Southey, &c. &c., resound beneath our gloomy skies, none have caught the ear of Fame, in the country which would seem to be the native land and to boast the native language of song.

The modern bards of England surpass those of Italy, as much as the immortal poets of Italy's bet-

ter days excel all other nations. I scarcely know how to name another modern Italian poet,—Hugo Foscolo's prose is better than his verse, and neither are of pre-eminent merit.

Casti is dead; and his *Animali Parlanti*, though it had all the advantages of being prohibited, first by Buonaparte, and next by the existing government, is, in my humble opinion, more talked of than read, more praised than admired, and more admired than it deserves. The strain of bitter sarcasm, which runs through it, shews quite as much malignity as wit; and who can read with patience the colloquies of lions, and other beasts, through three long volumes?

No work of modern days boasts any of the fire of fancy—the bright creations or inspired spirit of true poetry; and sickened with the dull, maudlin common-place that is thrust upon one, in every circle, one is tempted to ask one's-self if this is really the country that produced an Ariosto? But it *did* produce Ariosto, and that is atonement sufficient. One delightful flight of his imagination, is worth all that Italy has to boast in latter days.

His inexhaustible beauties and magic creations, that master both the fancy and the heart, have to me a witchery, beyond all that the strains, even of my native language, ever possessed. But it is not the present fashion among the critics, who judge from rule, and do not venture to trust to the true unbiassed voice of native taste and feeling, to extol Ariosto,—I mean as compared to Dante, and Petrarch, and Tasso, and all these more regular

marching poets. How little must they have ever felt his enchantment!

But it is excess of presumption in me to oppose their decision on such a subject, and Ariosto alone can be my excuse.

The Italian drama, I have already observed, is poor indeed, compared to ours. Poets out of number have written plays, but none of them have risen to any name or reputation, either in or out of Italy, excepting Alfieri and Goldoni, of whose works you have perhaps already discovered that I am not so enthusiastic an admirer as many of my countrymen.

Italian literature has one great desideratum, that of novels. You will stare and tell me of Boccacio, and all his tribe of imitators; but, not to mention their licentiousness, their *novelli* are not what we call novels. This will be sufficiently evident without reading them, (which I by no means counsel you to do,) from their size. When a hundred and one go to the making up of an octavo volume, it is plain they must be of a different species. These are perhaps, peculiar to Italy; but Italy has nothing to put in competition with the incomparable Don Quixote and Gil Blas, of Spain and France; and with these exceptions, England stands unrivalled in this delightful species of composition, to which every passing year now adds new and imperishable treasures.

The style and matter of the periodical publications, more especially of the critical journals of

Italy, are, beyond all comparison, beneath those of England, and are as remarkable for their unwearied dulness and verbosity, as ours for their wit and ability. The restrictions on the freedom of the press, are, doubtless, in a great measure, the cause of this. So curbed, English journals could scarcely have been much better.

If literature is not in a very flourishing condition at Rome, science is still less prosperous. It has ever been the policy of the Papal government, from the days of Galileo to the present time, to discourage, as much as possible, *the search after truth*. A spirit of enquiry, or of philosophical investigation, is that which it most deprecates. Consequently, the few who have any glimmerings of light on such subjects, are glad to hide their talent in a napkin, as if it were a crime. It is indeed true, that the study of antiquities is now unprohibited; that there is no longer any Paul II. to seize upon a whole Academy of antiquarians, throw them chained into dungeons, and put them to the torture, as conspirators and heretics; and that the name of Academy may now be pronounced, either in jest or earnest, without being guilty of heresy.*

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* Paulus tamen hæreticos eos pronunciavit qui nomen Academiæ, vel serio vel joco deinceps commemorarent.—Vide *Lives of the Popes, by Platina,* (*in Paulo II.*) or P. L. Guingene, (tom. iii. chap. 21,) *Histoire Litteraire d'Italie,* where I met with this curious statement. The Pope had seized Pomponius Lætus, and his whole Academy of antiquarians, —Platina himself among the rest,—and after confining them

Abundant use has been made of this privilege; academies of all kinds and sorts have been formed; books without end have been written, and still, accumulated discussions daily appear on the hundred times discussed brick walls and other unintelligible fragments of the antiquities of Rome,—but the antiquities of Nature are left unexplored. This term may be allowed me, for the lavas of the *Capo di Bove,* (the tomb of Cecilia Metella,) seem to be even of higher antiquity than those which are found below the foundations of the houses, and with which the streets are paved at Herculaneum and Pompeii; and when we reflect, that from the earliest records of time, not even tradition had told of volcanic eruption, we are startled at the visible trace of these subterranean fires, which we know have been extinguished during three thousand years, and are compelled to ascribe the devastating torrents we behold, to a period almost coeval with the birth of time.*

The marine shells, (bivalves,) which are found in immense number, imbedded in clay, on the sum-

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in dungeons and chains for nearly two years, and torturing them, until one died on the rack, he was compelled virtually to acknowledge their innocence, by his inability to produce a single proof of their guilt, and at length liberated them, enacting the above-mentioned sapient law.

* The Lavas of the Capo di Bove consist of eighteen different beds, or strata, forming the most complete and instructive series of volcanic substances known. They contain leucite, augite, zeolite, and nephelin, besides a great variety of undescribed substances.

mit of Monte Mario,* twenty miles from the coast, afford a curious proof that the ocean has had its convulsions as well as the land, and that Italy has been inundated with torrents of water, as well as fire.

These shells, which are in perfect preservation, are, generally at Rome, referred to the time of the Deluge; and however that may be, when we think of the thousands of years they have unquestionably lain there, they may safely lay claim to the title of natural antiquities.

But the wide field of research, which is open to the naturalist, in the vicinity of Rome, is little regarded, except by a few passing strangers.

I am no botanist, but it is impossible for the eye of a florist, or of a lover of Nature, not to be struck with the variety and prodigality of beauty, which paint the hills, the woods, and the plains around Rome, when the breath of spring wakes the vegetable creation into life. Fields covered over with patches of purple anemones; others blue with hyacinths; others yellow with a pretty species of ranunculus; others white with little bulbous rooted plants, like crocuses. The cliffs and rocky hills abound in shrubs similar to the laburnum, but of a different species, and with Daphnes, Passerinas, and Euphorbiums; the woods with Primulas, Verbascums, and Cyclamens. The common daisy is generally found twice as large as in our cottage gardens, and its "crimson tips" are infinitely more

* A steep hill, two miles from Rome.

brilliant. I am assured, by one of our first English botanists, that "the botanical riches" of this country, particularly in the month of March, and about Albano, La Riccia, and Velletri, are scarcely to be equalled in Europe; and that, excepting the plain of Granada, there is no other equal to the Campagna of Rome; indeed, the fine luxuriant leaves of the plants that cover it, as well as the rich tints of the flowers, seem to afford the strongest proof of the excellent quality of the soil.

"I wish," said a botanist to me one day, carried away by his enthusiasm for his favourite pursuit—"I wish I could give you any idea of the scenes presented every day to a botanical eye in Italy. Nothing can exceed the pleasure and delight which they afford; and whatever may be the superior beauty of tropical climates, there is one charm attached to the Italian plants, of which they can never be deprived—I mean that many of them are mentioned by Virgil."

At Rome the botanical garden is scarcely worth a visit. The science seems fallen into total neglect, and the professorship is a sinecure. At Pisa and Padua, I was surprised to find the plants arranged according to the system of Tournefort,—not of Linnæus. The gardens in both places are very well kept, and filled with a great variety of beautiful plants; so also is the botanical garden at Naples. Many of the finest have been described, and beautifully pourtrayed by Dr Tenore, in his superb work, the Flora Neapolitana. But with this exception, nothing can be more inert than the spirit

of science at Naples, although one would suppose that the wonderful phenomena of Nature, in its vicinity, would rouse the observation and enquiry, even of the most obtuse minds. In the north of Italy, on the contrary, amidst its flat, unvaried, alluvial plains, science and philosophy have of late made rapid advances, and almost all the scientific men that Italy can now boast, are to be found there, particularly at Bologna and Milan. Many other cities, no doubt, can boast men of science and erudition; but Milan, upon the whole, struck me as being the metropolis of literary talent, as Rome is of art. Schools, on the Lancastrian plan, have lately been established there, under the direction of Count Genforlonieri,—a most decisive sign of the active spirit of improvement which distinguishes this enlightened city.

But Milan is not my theme, nor Modena,—though I must stop to observe that *there* the microscope has lately been brought to a wonderful degree of perfection by the ingenious Amici, who has completely succeeded in conquering the difficulty of increasing the magnifying power, without diminishing the light; from which defect in the old microscope, the more the object was magnified, the more confused it became, and it was impossible to obtain a perfect image. In the best of this kind, the light was only as 0.00.25, but in his it is as 1.00; and the magnifying power, which in them never exceeded 150 times, in his may be increased to 1000 times; while the object, instead of being as formerly confused and indistinct, is perfectly clear and defined.

This is effected by the rays of light from a bright lamp being concentrated by a concave mirror, placed laterally to the tube, and thrown on the object; by means of another concave mirror, of an elliptical form, placed at the extremity of the tube, and by a small plane mirror at right angles between them, a magnified and distinct image of the object is formed in the focus, and is viewed through a magnifying lens, of any degree of power.

At Rome, however, there are few who are scientific, or who have even any interest in science. Nor is there a single Museum of natural history, public or private, worth looking at.

LETTER LXXXV.

CHILDBIRTH.—MARRIAGES AND FUNERALS.—DANCING.—GAMES.—FLATS, AND COMMON STAIRS.—MEAT.—COOKERY.—FOOD OF THE COMMON PEOPLE, &c.

You ask me so many questions about births, marriages, burials, balls, houses, games, meat, cookery, Michael Angelo, wild boars, and singing birds, that I scarcely know how or where to begin. Some of these questions I believe I have already anticipated, and the rest I shall try to answer as laconically as possible.

It is certainly true that women seem to suffer less in child-birth in Italy,—and I believe in all warm climates, where the muscles are more relaxed,—than in England, or any colder country;* but they by no means look upon it as a mere joke, nor is there any thing entertaining in it,—for they

* An English friend of mine assured me, she had suffered the most with her children that were born in Switzerland, the least with those that were born in Italy, and the medium degree with those born in England.

not infrequently die. Women of fortune scarcely ever nurse their children, and babies of all degrees are most cruelly cased up in swaddling-clothes. As for marriages, you will be shocked to hear that there is a great proportion of the year in which people cannot marry at all. The forbidden seasons are from the 28th of November, which is, I think, the beginning of Advent, till the seventh day of the new year; and from the beginning of Lent, till the end of Easter. Beside these stated interregnums, the people voluntarily abstain from marrying on Friday,—a day which, on account of the Crucifixion, has been esteemed unlucky in all Christian countries.

The marriage ceremony, I think, differs very little from that of the Church of England, (or, rather, the Church of England differs little from it,) except in a few signs of the cross, and sprinklings of holy water; and people are dressed very fine to look happy, and cry a great deal to look miserable; and make great dinners, which nobody can eat, and receive the congratulations of their friends, which nobody can like,—just as they do in England.

Burials, however, are conducted after a very different fashion. In no part of Italy, or any other country, have I seen such long and lugubrious funeral processions as in Rome. This custom, however, is confined to the wealthy citizens, for the lower orders, of course, cannot afford it, and the nobility do not give in to it. But when a rich shopkeeper, or any of his family dies, Rome is fill-

ed with the funeral-train. The corpse, dressed out in gay and splendid attire—exactly as if going to a ball—with the cheeks painted, is carried at the close of evening through the streets on an open bier, attended by every description of mourners that can be collected, and invariably followed by hired deputations of friars from at least three or four different convents, clad in the long penitential garb that covers even the head, with holes cut for the eyes, chaunting the slow and solemn service for the dead. These dismal sounds,—the long funeral procession that sometimes fills the Corso as far as the eye can reach, seen by the lurid glare of the immense wax-tapers that are borne by the mourners, and, more than all, the shocking sight of the corpse itself, exposed to view, and dressed up, as if in mockery, with the unseemly decorations of life and vanity, have an effect upon most people's nerves that is far from agreeable.

These processions are always on foot, for carriages at interments is a privilege confined to the nobility, whose funerals are sometimes almost as indecent, from the want of proper respect, as those of the plebeians from the superabundance of parade. In these the body is enclosed, as it should be, in a coffin; but this coffin, instead of being carried in a hearse, or on a bier, is put into a coach, and being much too long for the vehicle, one end of it sticks out at one of the windows, while four priests, who occupy the four corners, chaunt the service as fast as ever they can; the lighted tapers they bear in their hand, twinkling about as they go: A few livery ser-

vants, also bearing lights, precede the coach, on foot; and this is all! No sorrowing friends or relations attend, to their last home, the remains of one whom they were bound to love and honour. I have seen the funerals of members of some of the most ancient, and opulent noble families of Italy,—the Doria, the Colonna, and the Fiano, and all of them were conducted in this manner. The body, whether of prince or plebeian, always lies all night in the church in which it is to be interred, and is consigned to dust the following morning.

We saw the funeral of a Cardinal the other day. He was laid out on a sort of large state-bed, in a church, dressed in his richest robes of state, with diamond buckles in his shoes, and his face painted, —so very like life—that, during the whole ceremony, we could not help expecting to see him get up every moment. After a very long and peculiar burial service,—for Cardinals have one of their own,—the Pope, who had "assisted," as they call it,—that is, he had sat still and heard it,—at last got up, and having prayed, or seemed to pray, beside the bed, for the Cardinal's soul; he walked twice round it, sprinkling it with holy water, and twice round it throwing up clouds of incense, and so the ceremony ended. The Pope and the Cardinal were each put into their respective coaches. The Pope went to his present home to eat his dinner, the Cardinal to his long home,—not to eat, but to be eaten.

I since overheard, to my great amazement, an old woman lament herself that her son, who was very ill, had not died that day. On enquiry, she

told me that a Cardinal always carries up with him to heaven all those who die between the period of his death and burial. This accounts for an old painting I once saw on the mildewed wall of a church, representing a Cardinal in the act of flying upwards, with a number of people hanging to his skirts, which must be a very convenient mode of being smuggled into heaven.

Rome, I think, is the only great city of Italy in which the abominable practice of burying exclusively in the churches, is persisted in. At Naples, and some other places, they do occasionally inter the Great in them; but still they have the Campo Santo for the mass of the people. At Florence, and most of the towns in Tuscany, there is a large burying-ground without the city; but of all cemeteries I have ever seen, that at Bologna pleased me the most. It was formerly a Certosa convent: The cloister contains the tombs of the rich; the central enclosure, the graves of the poor. It is beautifully kept, and without exception, the cleanest place in Italy.

From burials to balls. What can I tell you of them? Balls are much the same all the world over: People put on gay dresses and faces, and smiles and civility; outwardly every body is alike, but inwardly, what different feelings agitate every heart! It would be curious to analyse what degrees of pleasure, pride, anger, hatred, malice, envy, mortification, vanity, and a thousand other opposing passions, go to the making up of every ball—what schemes are in people's heads, and what thoughts

in their hearts! But I presume you do not want the *morale* of it, only the outward shew. All the difference, then, that I can discover between a ball here, and a ball at home, is, that the Italian ladies have finer jewels, and the English ladies prettier faces; that the Italian gentlemen are more easily attracted, and the English gentlemen better worth attracting; that here, people eat more ice, and no supper; and dance more quadrilles, and no country-dances,—except, when out of compliment to the English, they punish themselves and us by blundering through something, so called. They waltz, too, at all their balls, but not remarkably well. The Germans and Swedes surpass the rest of the world in the waltz. The Neapolitans, I thought, almost excelled the French themselves in quadrille dancing. There was no exertion, no effort, no shewing off. It was the most easy and natural, yet smooth and graceful motion, in the world.

I have never seen the Tarantello, that extraordinary dance that is supposed to be involuntarily caused by the bite of the tarantula, and to work its cure; but it may be doubted whether this dance be really independent of volition or not; for as the tarantula is found all over Italy, it is probable that it sometimes bites people in other places; yet it is only at Naples that they are seized with this dance; and even there, it is not to be supposed that it always refrains from putting its fangs into the bodies of the higher orders; yet none of them are ever attacked with it.

The lower class of Romans, I think I told you, are no great dancers: except at the conclusion of

the vintage, when they come into Rome like a set of Bacchanals, dancing, leaping, bearing torches, and playing on musical instruments, and at the Bacchanalian Sports which ensue, at that period, on Monte Testaccio,—little dancing goes forward.

The *Saltarello*, as its name implies, is a dance of great action, and is, for the most part, confined to the Trasteverini. I have already mentioned the Morra, and the Ruzzica, and some other games, chiefly practised amongst them, which seem to be of Roman origin. There is also the Pallone, a game at ball, common, I believe, throughout Italy, and played by two parties, who throw the pallone, or great leathern ball, from one to another, by means of the bracciale, a wooden instrument covered with knobs, in which they thrust their arms. It seems to be very similar to the game of ball, which the Roman philosophers of old used to practice by way of exercise and amusement. There is another game of foot-ball among the modern Italians, called Calcio, which I have never seen.

The people here live in *flats*, and have a common stair, as in Edinburgh; a plan by no means confined to that much-vilified city, or even to this—but common throughout France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Though by no means conducive to cleanliness or comfort, it is highly favourable to grandeur of appearance, and architectural effect: For by this means the houses are built upon so much larger a scale, that their exterior is susceptible of fine design and ornament; and even when plain, or in bad taste, it is scarcely possible they

should not have a more noble air, than the mean, paltry, little rows of houses in England and Holland, where every body must have one of their own. It is the office of a mason to build these rows of plain walls with doors and windows in them, that constitute the houses in English towns; but it is that of the architect to erect them on the Continent.

There is one peculiarity of the *flats* of Rome, which, (thank Heaven,) we have not in Edinburgh. As you go up a common stair here, you observe a square grating in every door. Knock at one of them—somebody comes, uncloses the wooden shutter that covers it, and eyes you suspiciously through the bars before he ventures to open it—and this at noonday! Wherever you live in Rome, you must be content to live on a common stair. If your abode be a palace, it will be the same thing. The most you can hope for is a primo or secondo piano to yourself. Lodgings for single gentlemen, or for small families, abound; upon a larger scale, it is more difficult to find accommodation. On the whole, however, they are tolerably commodious, and by no means exorbitant. Living is very good all through Italy, in large towns; miserably bad in the country: For instance, you are sure to find plenty of milk and butter in a city, but none amidst fields and farm-houses. Rome is well supplied with good cow's milk, and cream, and butter. Asses, too, are brought to your door morning and evening, to be milked, if you choose it,—a great advantage to invalids; but cows do not perambulate the streets here as at Naples, for that purpose, with

bells to their necks. Butcher-meat at Rome is plentiful, but not cheap. The price is kept up by the absurd interference of Government. Beef is good; the best sells at about 5½d. a-pound, of 12 ounces; but, by a curious prejudice, it is very little used at the tables of the higher orders, being considered a coarse gross kind of food, only fit for the vulgar—and the English. Veal is accounted a delicacy; it is dear, and what in England would be called bad. Mutton is not good here, nor in any part of Italy. Pork is thought very fine. Kid is much used, and is very sweet and delicate. The fish is not remarkably good. Game is abundant, cheap, and excellent. Geese are never eat at all. Pigeons are large, strong-flavoured, and very like ducks. In fact, neither meat nor poultry are so good in any part of the Continent as in England. The French cooks certainly excel ours—perhaps because the meat is worse; just as Scotland produces the best gardeners in the world, having the worst soil and climate. Italian cookery, however, in large towns, is reasonably good. In country inns, you must expect to be poisoned with oil and garlic, in spite of all your precautionary prohibitions against *olio* and *aglio;* but this is of less consequence, because, in these places, there is seldom any thing to cook.

At Rome, strangers who live in private lodgings, generally have dinners sent home to them from a *Trattoria*, in the Piazza di Spagna. The dishes are all conveyed in a large basket, lined with tin, with a little stove or iron heater inside; so that they are quite hot, and very good, but certainly not cheap,

for they cost ten pauls, or about five shillings, a-head, without wine, bread, or desert.

Some English families, whose lodgings had the rare appendage of a kitchen, tried the plan of having dinner dressed at home, but their cooks cheated them so unmercifully, that they were nearly ruined; they then made a contract with them, and were nearly starved.

There is one *table d'hote* kept by Frantz, a German, at the Scudo di Francia, where there is a dinner every day both at two and five, and where the fare is said to be as good and plentiful, and the price as cheap, as in France. It is chiefly frequented by young foreign artists and students. The lower orders certainly live upon very little in Italy. It is only at Naples that macaroni is the food of the people. At Rome, and in most parts of Italy, polenta, a sort of pudding, made of Indian corn, is the principal article of subsistence. This is varied with the luscious pods of the caruba tree,* the almond-tasted kernels in the cones of the spreading pine-tree, different sorts of fruits, particularly roasted chesnuts, which, in the mountainous parts of the country, the people almost live upon; and various kinds of beans, lupins, and lentils. Of course, in all places they eat bread—where they can get it; and cheese, sausages, &c., are universally liked. Indeed, these, with salt-

* According to tradition, the tree upon which Judas hanged himself.

fish, (or baccalao,) and soup, (or minestra,) made of boiled bread or macaroni and water, and mixed with a little grated cheese, are their luxuries. But the thin, sour, ordinary wine of the country, is indispensible to them; and, truth to say, in the heat of summer, it is far from being an unpleasant beverage. It is considered at its perfection in a year "Vino d' un' anno," is proverbially good.

Sobriety is a national virtue here, as in most warm climates, and indeed no quantity of such wine can intoxicate; but the Italians, of all ranks, are fond of rosolio, and other liqueurs, though they scarcely ever drink them to excess. The abstemious habits of the Italians render seasons of scarcity, when they do occur, peculiarly dreadful. In the consumption of a people who already live upon as little as will support human nature, no reduction can be made. Hence scarcity is synonymous with famine.

To come to your last queries. Of Michael Angelo you have heard, by this time, I am sure, more than enough. Of wild boars there are great abundance, but of singing birds very few. The "songsters of the grove" are generally eat up; not that the Italians are quite so unmerciful to them as the French, who would make no scruple of baking "four-and-twenty nightingales all in a pye," if they could get them; but still they do occasionally make a classical dinner upon thrushes; or, in default of better, string a dozen cockrobins on one little spit.

The wild boars abound among the Sabine Hills,

and the wild country around them. The peasants shoot them, and bring them to market at Rome. Their flesh is firm, dark, high-flavoured, and delicious, as different as possible to pork, both in appearance and taste. The great desideratum I have found at the Italian table, is potable vegetables. In towns, they are scarce, and far from good; in the country, there are none. And this must arise from the indolence of the people; for in such a climate and soil as this, with good management, they might have the finest vegetables of all kinds, all the year round.

The indolence of the Italian character, indeed, is the feature that, from first to last, forces itself most strongly on the stranger's notice. No doubt, this is, in great measure, to be ascribed to the climate; but it also partly arises from the government, the institutions, and above all,—the religion of the country. Wherever the Catholic religion is established, I have uniformly observed indolence, with its concomitants,—dirt and beggary, to prevail; and the more Catholic is the place, the more do they abound. Spain and Portugal, and Italy and Ireland, might be quoted as examples; and in going from the Protestant to the Catholic cantons of Switzerland, the change uniformly struck us.

There is another and more powerful cause in Italy for the indolence of the people,—the constitution of society. It is framed so as to hold every man in the situation in which he is born. There are barriers he can never pass. Wealth, even if

he can get it, will not give him that for which it is most sought,—respect and importance; and I must say, that if a man does become rich in Italy,—(a rare circumstance!)—it is generally by knavery, by iniquity, by the most nefarious practices; not by honourable industry, integrity, and good conduct. That they might become rich by these means, I do not doubt; on the contrary, I think,—in thus continually labouring to cheat others,—they often cheat themselves, and that they would find "honesty the best policy," if they could be persuaded to try it; but it is certain that men in Italy do sometimes make large fortunes by practices that, in England, would lead them to the gallows.

In England, every thing is open to talent, merit, and enterprize: In Italy, every thing is closed. A man, by his own personal exertions, scarcely can expect to make himself other than he is. Thus the powerful stimulus of hope is taken off; and can we wonder at the paralysing effect?

LETTER LXXXVI.

CANOVA.

ROME indisputably possesses both the first ancient and modern school of sculpture. The incomparable Museums of the Vatican, the Capitol, and the Villa Albani, have drawn around them those great artists, whose genius far surpasses all the world has seen since the days of Michael Angelo, and John of Bologna; and in the judgment of many, even soars above those celebrated masters.

The first of these, both in fame and merit, is Canova. To him, the renovation of modern taste,—which had fallen into the most woeful corruption, through the tortuous labours of Bernini, and his wretched imitators, must be attributed. He restored the study of the fine forms of Nature, and of the antique; and sought in these true sources of beauty, for that purity of taste, and that chastened simplicity and grace, which can alone make the works of the artist live. He first had the merit of striking into the long-neglected path, and even if others should outstrip him in it, they must

own him for their guide. In one great branch of the art, that of basso rilievo, he is unquestionably surpassed by Thorwaldsen, (of whose works I shall speak hereafter,) but it is the branch in which he is remarkably deficient. I should say his basi rilievi are positively bad.

Canova was born at Possagno, a small village in the Venetian territory, of parents, whose poverty disabled them from giving to the genius his earliest youth displayed, the usual cultivation or encouragement. But he resolutely struggled with every difficulty, and finally triumphed over his fate.

At the age of fourteen, having obtained the long-wished for boon of a small piece of marble, he sculptured out of it two baskets of fruit, which are now on the staircase of the Palazzo Farsetti, at Venice.

The next year, when only fifteen, he executed Eurydice, his first statue, in a species of soft stone, called Pietra Dolce, found in the vicinity of Vicenza; and, three years after, Orpheus, both of which are in the Villa Falier, near Asolo, a town about fifteen miles from Treviso.

His first groupe in marble, that of Dædalus and Icarus, he finished at he age of twenty, and brought with him to Rome, where he vainly solicited the patronage of the Venetian ambassador, and of many of the great; but when almost reduced to despair, without money or friends, he became known to Sir William Hamilton, whose discernment immediately saw the genius of the young

artist, and whose liberality furnished him with the means of prosecuting his studies, and of establishing himself as an artist in Rome. To this, his first patron, and to all his family, Canova has through life manifested the warmest gratitude.

Through Sir William Hamilton, his merit became known to others; even the Venetian ambassador was shamed into some encouragement of his young countryman, and ordered the groupe of Theseus and the Minotaur. A few years after, Canova was employed to execute the tomb of Pope Ganganelli, in the Church of the SS. Apostoli, at Rome. With these exceptions, all his early patrons were Englishmen. Amongst these were Lord Cawdor, Mr Latouche, and Sir Henry Blundell, for the latter of whom the Psyche, one of the earliest and most beautiful of his works, was executed.

In the bewitching grace and softness of feminine beauty, and the playful innocence of childhood, Canova excels all others—and even himself; for in the heroic style he certainly does not soar so high. His heroes either border on effeminacy, like his Perseus; or fly into extravagance, like his Hercules. Yet, with all their faults, his works in this style are conceptions of true genius. The idea is bold and grand; but we feel that he has overshot his mark. He has got out of Nature, in attempting to rise above it,—and the eye that has been accustomed to the chaste design and correct forms of ancient art, must be hurt with their glaring defects.

Indeed, it is unreasonable to suppose, that any one artist, of whatever powers, should excel in departments so opposite. One might as well expect that Michael Angelo,—whose genius, by the way, is the very Antipodes of that of Canova,—should have produced *his* smiling Hebes, voluptuous Venuses, and dancing Nymphs,—that Albano should have pourtrayed the gloomy anchorites and martyrdoms of Caravaggio and Spagnoletti,—Salvator Rosa painted the warm sunshines of Cuyp,—or Pindar written the epic poems of Homer,—as that Canova, who can call forth at will the most bewitching forms of female beauty and grace, should excel in an Ajax or a Hercules.

Canova's sepulchral monuments, too, seem to me to have a heaviness and want of interest. We feel they have been a labour to his fancy, and they are rather a toil to us:—For whether Italy weeps over the tomb of Alfieri,—Rome writes on a tablet,—Padua's castellated head meditates, over nothing,—or Religion looks clumsy on the tomb of Rezzonico,—we turn wearied from their contemplation, and from the expression of the unmeaning lisp of admiration which habit or politeness draws forth,—to the bright and immortal creations of his genius,—to his Hebes, his Venuses, his dancing Nymphs, his infant Loves, and his laughing Graces.

Of these, his Hebe, which has been four times repeated with variations, is, perhaps, the most universally admired. I cannot, however, approve of the gold necklace with which the last is adorned; not even the sanction of antiquity can ever recon-

tile me to decorations so unsuited to sculpture. We know that the practice of some of the greatest masters of Greece may be adduced, not only for necklaces, and ear-rings, and ornaments of all kinds, in gold and precious stones,—but for painted cheeks. If this was done, however, in the vain attempt to create a nearer approach to living nature, the objects of sculpture seem to have been strangely mistaken and debased. Most certainly they do not consist in the close imitation of life; for, in that case, a common raree-show of wax-work, would exceed the finest sculpture of Phidias. Upon what principle this custom can be reconciled to true taste, I am at a loss to understand. To me it seems about as bad as the Gothic custom of investing painted heads with real crowns.

The Venus coming out of the Bath,* in all its fourfold repetitions, varies, in some points, from the original; and the last, destined for Lord Lansdowne, and perhaps the most beautiful of them all, is, in fact, a new statue.

But Canova's own favourite is the Venus Victorious, under which the beautified portrait of the Principessa Paolina Borghese is represented; and this, I think, I before told you, is withheld from view by its possessor.

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* Originally done for the gallery of Florence, when it was robbed of the Venus de Medicis, and now in the Palazzo Pitti.

Perhaps the most beautiful of all his works,—the Venus and Adonis,*—was finished at the age of six-and-thirty. This exquisite groupe, in my opinion, far surpasses the Mars and Venus, which he is now doing for the Prince Regent. It was intended to represent Peace and War, but it is not sufficiently chaste or severe for such a subject; the expression is too voluptuous, a fault, by the way, with which the works of this great artist are sometimes chargeable. Yet it is a beautiful groupe, and if considered merely as Venus hanging on the enamoured God of War, the expression is appropriate and faultless. As yet, it has not advanced beyond the model, and there seems little prospect of its being soon finished. Three blocks of marble have already failed, after the labour was considerably advanced, owing to the blemishes in the heart of them, and the fourth is about to be tried.

The beautiful figure of the reclining Nymph, half-raising herself to listen to the lyre of the sweet little Love at her feet, is on the point of being dispatched to the Prince Regent, to whom it was ceded by Lord Cawdor.

The groupe of the Graces, the beauty of which is the object of universal admiration here, is also destined for our country, and will adorn Woburn Abbey. Beautiful as it is, I own it struck me as being rather *manieré*, especially in the attitude and face of the central figure, which is chargeable

* It is in the palace of the Marchese Berio, at Naples.

with somewhat of affectation,—somewhat of studied Opera-house airs, and *put-on* sweetness of countenance. But I criticize with reluctance a work, which, whatever may be its faults, has rarely been equalled in modern art, and the progress of which I have long watched with unspeakable interest and delight. It is only a few days since I saw the finishing strokes given to it by the hand of Canova.

Perhaps you may have no very clear idea of the progress of a sculptor in his work; at least, I find that many of my countrymen, whom I have introduced to Canova's studio, had previously supposed that his custom was to fall upon a block of marble, and chisel away till he made it into a statue. Forgive me for the improbable supposition, that you should be in such an error; but let me explain, that a sculptor begins upon much more ductile materials than marble. He forms his model in clay, and this is entirely the work of his own hands; but before he begins, the statue is perfectly *ideato*,—the visionary figure is before him.

When finished, a cast is taken from it by his assistants, which is dotted over with black points at regular intervals, to guide the workmen. From this model they begin to work, and having reduced the block of marble into form, and made it a rough-hewn statue, the sculptor himself resumes his labours. The exterior surface, as it were, is his to form and perfect, and the last finishing touches he generally gives by candle-light. It is afterwards polished with pumice-stone.

This is the invariable process. Many are the delightful hours I have spent with Canova, both when he has been employed in modelling and chiselling; and few are the companions whose society will be enjoyed with such interest, or remembered with such regret.

The warmth and kindness of his disposition, the noble principles and generous feelings of his mind, and the unpretending simplicity of his manners, give the highest charm to his exalted genius. By the friends that know him best, he will be the most beloved.

Canova has the avarice of fame, not of money. He devotes a great part of his fortune to the purposes of benevolence. With the title of Marchese, the Pope conferred upon Canova three thousand piastres of rent, the whole of which he dedicates to the support and encouragement of poor and deserving artists. But I should never be done, were I to recount the one-half of the noble actions, the generous exertions, and the extensive charities of his life, which are as secretly and unostentatiously performed, as judiciously applied. He is now building a church in his native village, and has alienated the greatest part of his own fortune for the support of charitable institutions.

It is not, I believe, generally known, that Canova is a painter as well as sculptor. He has pursued the sister art occasionally, for the amusement of his leisure hours, and many of his designs are truly beautiful.

The Colossal Horse, (a noble animal,) intended

for Napoleon's equestrian statue, is about to be mounted by the figure of old King Ferdinand of Naples.

It must be a gratifying circumstance to England to know, that even when living under the immediate dominion of the French, he modelled, for his own private pleasure, a tribute to the memory of Nelson.

He is at present occupied in modelling a statue of Washington, for the United States. The hero is represented seated, but it is not yet finished, so I must not speak of it; especially as I am at present the only person who has been honoured with a sight of it. I may add, that it promises to be worthy of the subject and the sculptor.

The seated statue of the Princess Esterhazy, is full of grace and dignity, and worthy of ancient art. That of Maria Louisa, is also very fine; I mean the copy, with an ideal head; for her own features are wholly inadmissible in sculpture. She would have done wisely to have been taken in a moment of affliction, her face buried in her handkerchief, or mantle.

The figure of the Penitent, or Magdalen, is most beautiful. It proves he could pourtray the touching image of youth, in all the abandonment of settled sorrow, as beautifully as youth in all the buoyancy of sportive mirth.

But if I were to enumerate all Canova's masterpieces, and all his merits, I might write a volume.

LETTER LXXXVII.

THORWALDSEN.

THE rival of Canova is Thorwaldsen, the Dane, an artist, whose genius has already borne him through every obstacle, and far beyond every other competitor, (Canova excepted,) to the head of his art; whose statues must be ranked next to those of Canova, and whose bassi rilievi surpass all that has been given to the world since the brightest era of Grecian art.

His greatest work, the Triumph of Alexander the Great, was ordered by Napoleon, for a frieze to ornament a chamber of the Quirinal Palace, in which the plaister cast is now put up; but before it was sculptured, the career of the emperor was run; and the present government, with crippled resources, and an overpowering priesthood, could not afford to lavish money on a work of taste, so that Thorwaldsen was in despair of ever giving to his masterpiece the durability of marble; when, only a few days ago, the liberality of a private individual, an Italian nobleman, whose name I have yet to learn, gave him the long-wished for order.

Nothing can surpass many parts of this frieze. I may instance Alexander in his car of triumph; but, as a whole, it has, perhaps, been drawn into too

great length; there is occasionally a paucity of subject, a want of variety, of action, and of figures of high interest, which give it an air of poverty. A flock of sheep, extended over a space of nine or ten feet, for example, is wearisome alike to the eye and to the mind. Modern artists, indeed, labour under an immeasurable disadvantage, in having all their fine models in art, not in nature. They cannot, like the ancients, imitate the objects, the modes, the costumes, that are forever in their eye, in all their happy accidental combinations; they must turn from life to inanimate marble, and coldly copy from it, in faint transcript, the ancient car, the classic pomp, the laurel crown, the heroic armour, the graceful flowing robes. What sort of figure would our coaches, our coats and neckcloths, our boots and spurs, or our military uniforms with cocked hat and feather, make in sculpture?

The constant exhibitions of the finest youthful forms, in the athletic games, and the liberty of designing their great men in the heroic style (nude,) were amongst the many great advantages the ancients possessed over the moderns. Still, however, the female form, with its variable draperies, is almost as well adapted to statuary as ever; for though Fashion has rendered its habitual attire totally unfit for sculpture, its flowing robes are so much more tractable than male costume, that they may be considered at the disposition of the artist; and accordingly, we find that all the great artists of the present day, have succeeded best in female figures.

The busts of some of my fair countrywomen, with their hair dressed,—according to their own express desire,—in the extreme of the present French fashion, sometimes draw a smile, as they catch one's eye in the studios of Roman artists, beside the classic models of a Vestal or an Agrippina. The female busts of certain periods of the empire, however, will, at least, match them in the extravagance and ugliness of their well-wigged head-dresses. Independent of hair, however, the men of our country make far finer busts than the young ladies, whose small delicate features were never meant for marble.

The finest bust I have seen in Rome, is that of Lord Byron, by Thorwaldsen; but neither Thorwaldsen nor Canova, in this branch of art, surpass our own Chantry.

Thorwaldsen's exquisite and poetic rilievo of Night, has rarely been equalled in any age. The Forging of Achilles's Armour, has often been taken by connoisseurs, for one of the finest productions of ancient art, and many of his sepulchral bassi rilievi are pre-eminently beautiful. One, in particular, to the memory of a German, (called, I think, Bateman,) who fell in battle, struck me with peculiar admiration. His family are hanging over him in every attitude of deep and speechless woe; his brother bears in his hand the crown won by his valour; and the Genius of Life, bending over his inanimate form, seems to mourn the extinguished torch, whose brightness he has been compelled to quench.

Of his statues—the Adonis is one of the earliest of his works, and most beautiful. The Mars, though wonderfully fine, is, perhaps, scarcely equal to it. The Shepherd Boy, seated on a rock, is supremely beautiful,—full of grace and expression. But I should never have done, were I to enumerate the one-half of the admirable works, which I have gazed upon a thousand times with unwearied delight, in Thorwaldsen's studio.

He is now employed in modelling a beautiful figure of Hope, the idea of which was, perhaps, suggested by the small mutilated statue among the Egina marbles, though I do not fear contradiction in asserting, that this is infinitely finer; in passing through his mind, he has given the idea a beauty and originality, that stamp it all his own.

She is represented—as in the original—bearing in her hand a budding pomegranate flower; she seems to see in fancy the time when its bloom shall fully expand, and its rich fruit be matured. I marvel that an image so lovely and natural, did not more frequently suggest itself to the poet's fancy. It is to Greece, after all, that we owe every thing of taste and imagination.

I feel, in this imperfect sketch, I have done little justice to the merit of this truly great genius, who has come from the frozen shores of Iceland* to the land of arts, to astonish the natives of her brilliant

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*Thorwaldsen, I believe, was born at Copenhagen; his father was an Icelander, who settled there.

clime, with works that might have done honour to her earlier days.

If those works were better known in our own country, they would not need my humble tribute of applause, to speak their excellence, or swell *his* fame. But that must rapidly increase, and will be immortal. More competent judges may appreciate more highly and more justly his merits; but none can better know and estimate the sensitive modesty and sensibility, the warm generosity, and the rare and estimable virtues of his character.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

ÆGINA MARBLES.

THE Egina Marbles have been so completely restored by Thorwaldsen, in the true spirit and force of the original, that, in contemplating them, the eye feels nothing to desire.

The discovery of seventeen perfect specimens of a celebrated school, unique in its character, which flourished six hundred years before the Christian era, which was known to us only by the report of writers of antiquity, (for not a single monument of it was extant,) was beyond all hope, and is, perhaps, the most important accession to art that has taken place for ages.

A blank, in its gradation, is hereby filled up. The Egina School stands between the Etruscan and the Grecian, and verges upon both in some respects, though distinct from either in more important characteristics.

The best judges, indeed, have felt and acknow-

ledged the difficulty of drawing a clear distinction between the Etruscan and the early Grecian; but, comparing the Egina marbles with undoubted Etruscan sculptures, it seems to bear a near resemblance to them in the well-known style of the drapery, and in the arrangement of the hair; in which two formal rows of the stiffest little curls are ranged round the unmeaning face. With diffidence, too, I would say, that the form of the helmets, in the Egina marbles, bears a striking similitude to those in that common sepulchral subject of the Etruscan urns,—the combat of Echetles;—but I speak of the latter from remembrance. However this may be, the Egina sculpture has lost much of the monotony, and the stiff erect rigidity of attitude, that adheres in some degree to all the Etruscan statues, in which the Egyptian, softened down and thawed into life, still appears. The Egyptian figures indeed always remind me of their mummies. One sees, too, that the artist, conscious of his weakness, timorously confined himself to that which was most easy of execution, making man, as much as possible, an erect pillar,—a sort of regular mathematical figure; and that he durst not venture upon any approach to the grace or freedom of Nature, much less upon momentary action—for which the Egina statues are remarkable.

Above all other sculpture, indeed, they are distinguished for their varied display of the human figure,—for the strong muscular delineation,—the wonderful anatomical precision,—and the nice p

lection which charms the eye. Still more striking are their bold and original attitudes, and their powerful expression and force of action.

What is the most singular, however, and the least admirable about them, is, that all the faces are prototypes of each other; and so far inferior to the figures, that it is obvious the style of an earlier age has been retained in them. This can only be accounted for from motives of religious veneration, towards some particular model. It has been thought, on this account, that they represented the *Eacidae*, the deified heroes of Egina,—but no actions are recorded of these worthies, that can explain the subject of this sculpture; besides, Minerva and the men are precisely similar, and it could not be necessary that she should bear the family resemblance; and all are equally devoid of expression, even to a degree of vacant idiotism. The countenances of the prostrate heroes, pierced with the death-wound, wear the same senseless smile of fatuity.

All of them are on a scale considerably below that of Nature, which obviously arose from the necessity of conforming their height to that of the pediments of the temple they adorned. They were found, I may say, by mere accident, in an excavation made in the island of Egina, in the year 1811, by Mr Cockerell and Mr Foster, Baron Haller and Mr Linkh, which had for its object the determination of some disputed points in Grecian architecture. From two of these gentlemen, I had the particulars of this interesting discovery, and from

their valuable observations I have been indebted for much of the pleasure I received from the examination of the sculpture.*

On the western pediment of the temple, eleven of the statues were found nearly entire. On the eastern, five only were recovered, and these much shattered. All the rest on this side were wholly destroyed, and their scattered fragments have been collected in vain. This is the more to be lamented, because these statues are far superior to the others, and pronounced to be the work of a greater master. Their subject and arrangement seem to have been much the same, and will be best understood by attending to those which were found entire on the western pediment.

In viewing them, no one statue can, or ought to be, considered apart. They are parts of one great groupe, and we must attend, not so much to their individual appearance, as their general effect. We see that the action of each has reference to the others, like the figures in a picture; and, indeed, never—except in these grand historical *pictures of statuary,* which adorned the pediments of the Parthenon, of the Temple of Egina, and most others of

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* The accurate designs of their original position, drawn by Mr Cockerell, from notes taken on the spot, give a very satisfactory idea of their connection with each other. These, which I saw at Rome, I find, have since been published in the 12th and 14th Numbers of the Quarterly Journal.

ancient Greece—were the beauties and effects of sculpture and painting, intimately combined; for to sculpture, besides its own peculiar advantages, is here given the grouping, composition, and relative action of painting. It is obvious, that the combat here represented, is for the body of the dying hero, (by far the most beautiful of them all) which one party is trying to seize, and the other to defend; and among all the varied explanations which have been given of the subject, that of the combat for the body of Patroclus, seems to me by far the most satisfactory. In the midst appears Minerva, as described by Homer, animating the Grecians. Her statue and drapery are peculiarly fine. There is a peculiarity in her Ægis, which is destitute of the snakes.

The figure of the Archer in the Phrygian cap, and the close elastic dress, which covers, without concealing his body, is very singular. He is supposed to be one of the Trojans.

Perfect common nature is represented in these statues, with admirable skill and science; but there is little of *the ideal* in any of them, except in the faultless figure of the dying hero, which is a masterpiece of sculpture.

They are obviously the works of an age, when art had shaken off the shackles of earlier times, and made great advances to that perfection at which it afterwards arrived; but they are far removed from the grandeur of those works with which Phidias enriched the Pantheon; or the still brighter period,

when the Laocoon, the Torso, the Dying Gladiator, and the Apollo, were designed, for the wonder and admiration of future ages.

The temple in which they were found, is believed, I know not upon what authority, to have been that of Jupiter Pannellenius; yet, though there is abundant proof that there was such a temple, there is none whatever, that there was no other; and as the statue of Minerva was found surmounting both pediments, it would seem more reasonable to ascribe the temple to her, especially as no vestige whatever of Jupiter has been discovered. This point is, however, extremely immaterial; further than that if this be *not* that famous Temple of Jupiter, and if its site could be elsewhere traced, the discovery of more hidden treasures might reward the industry of future excavators. The earthquake that buried these, may have involved other temples and other sculpture in its ruins.

It is a strange paradox, that it is to the destructive convulsions of Nature, we owe the preservation of some of the most valuable remains of art. Herculaneum and Pompeii, the bas reliefs of the Arcadian Temple of Apollo,* on Mount Cotylion near Phigalia, and the Egina Marbles, are by no means the only instances.

It is well known, that the two English discover-

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* Now in the British Museum; the work of the same era as those of the Parthenon, but of very inferior sculpture.

ers of the Egina marbles, took infinite pains to have them secured to our country, but in vain. At their sale, in the island of Zante, the Prince Royal of Bavaria, not the Prince Regent of England, was their purchaser.

LETTER LXXXIX.

SCULPTORS.—PAINTERS.—ARTISTS.

THE third sculptor in eminence at Rome, is Rodolph Schadow, a native of Prussia, whose fame, I think, scarcely equal to his desert, for he is an artist of first-rate genius, and some of his works would not dishonour the best era of Grecian taste.

Perhaps, indeed, he sometimes approaches rather too closely to individual models of ancient sculpture—for the general spirit can never be too strongly preserved; but we can often trace the immediate source of his ideas, which is never agreeable. This is particularly striking in his pretty little figure of the Girl just issuing from the Bath, tying her sandal on her slender foot, which immediately recals the well-known statue in the Florentine gallery, in a similar attitude.

Rodolph Schadow, is, however, no slavish copyist from the antique, nor would I impeach the originality of his genius. Many of his ideas are truly his own; and even when this is not the case, he is quite as close an imitator of the beauty, as the forms, of ancient sculpture; and I know not how higher praise can be given to any modern artist.

By far his most beautiful work, among many that are beautiful, is the *Filatrice*,—a female figure, of singular delicacy and grace, sitting twining a golden thread upon a spindle. It is singular, that almost all the great sculptors of the present day, seem to excel in the female form, and the reverse of this remark applies to painters.

These three great names, Canova, Thorwaldsen, and Schadow, stand prominent in fame among the crowd of artists at Rome; but the numbers of sculptors who are settled here, is scarcely credible. Among these there are many whose works and merits are well worthy of notice; but enumeration is so dull, that I shall only mention one, the Signora Teresa Benincampé, whose beautiful bust of Cæsino, and many of her other works, need only be seen to be admired; I cannot, at the same time, refrain from offering my sincere tribute of respect, to her distinguished talents and independent mind, or expressing my fervent wish, that her success may be proportioned to her deserts.

In busts, (portrait busts I mean,) Chantry, I think, equals, if not excels, all foreign artists; and if he had enjoyed their inestimable advantages of living among the masterpieces of ancient sculpture, and drinking in their beauties at every glance and at every moment, I have no doubt he would have rivalled them in the higher departments of sculpture,—even in the ideal. His conceptions are truly fine, and give promise of great future excellence; but his genius is not yet fully matured, and it requires that cultivation which England cannot afford. This, indeed, is the true school of arts. If

there be any taste or talent, it must develope itself here.

The painters are scarcely inferior to the sculptors of Rome in number, but infinitely so in excellence. Camuccini is the most celebrated; perhaps he may justly be called the first living historical painter in the world, but this, after all, is but poor positive praise. West certainly cannot compete with him in correct design and chaste composition; nor can any of the modern French or Germans, with all their extravagance and *bombast*, their stage-struck attitudes, and overcharged expression, approach to him in any thing. I am sorry to say he nearly descends to their level in the false tone and revolting glare of his colouring; not that he is so bad—for language falls short of terms in which to describe their badness—but he is far from good. How an eye like Camuccini's, so quick to discern the harmonious tints, the soft blended lights, the magic chiaro' oscuro, the breadth, and truth, and nature, and effect, of the colouring of the great masters—can endure to look at his own, is to me inconceivable. Its glare, and tawdriness, and violence, hurt and offend one's eyes, and are a complete outrage on Nature. For this reason, almost the only works of Camuccini, which I can look at with satisfaction, are his studies in chiaro' oscuro. The cartoon sketch of the Marriage of Cupid and Psyche, in his studio, for instance, is far superior to the finished fresco at the Palazzo Torlonia, although the colouring of that is by no means so bad as many of his works. His composition is chaste and scientific, and he certainly de-

signs extremely well. I have seen nothing of his which is not admirably drawn, and this is one of the first requisites of his art, and one of the rarest attainment. Still it will not do alone. A groupe of cold academical figures will not make a fine painting. Camuccini, like many modern painters, cannot persuade himself to part with his dear outline, which he preserves at all hazards. In short, what he wants is colouring and expression. I feel as if, in these observations, I had borne hard upon the works of an artist, whose genius and assiduity in his profession, have raised him to great and deserved eminence. Yet, I know not what I can do, except repeat what I have already said, that his design is *very very* good, and his colouring *very very* bad; that his composition often deserves great praise—but that in expression he is seldom very happy; that when we compare him with other living artists, he rises very high, and when with the great masters of better days, he falls very low.

There is a very young artist, little known to fame, of whose talents and early promise, I am inclined to think more favourably than any other who has yet fallen within my observation. His name is Agricola,* and although not yet twenty, his studies seem to me to mark uncommon genius. His Petrarch and Laura, though perhaps a little too much in the taste and style of Leonardo da

* His studio, when I was at Rome, was at the top of the Palazzo Guistiniani, but he had little money and few friends, and I scarcely know whether he has been able to maintain himself there.

Vinci, has, however, great merit; and his Madonna has a depth and truth of expression, and an originality and force of conception, that could scarcely have been expected in so hackneyed a subject.

Pinelli is an artist of great talent in his line, which is character costume; his groupes are highly picturesque, and depicted with perfect fidelity. I know no one who succeeds so well in seizing the manners and character, while he seems only to be representing the dress; and he sometimes introduces a happy stroke of satire, which will not be lost upon those who are versed in Italian manners.

I feel unwilling to speak of the landscape painters at Rome, for I do not wish to censure, and I find little to praise. Keisermann, a plodding German, laboriously paints very pretty pictures; but above prettiness his works never do, nor will rise. Gabrielli, a clever, and very self-sufficient Italian, sketches remarkably well; but his paintings I can by no means admire. Bassi, a persevering young artist of considerable talent, has lately greatly improved himself. There are many more, but the truth is there is no great, scarcely a good, landscape painter in Italy.

It is wonderful, that in a country where the soft lights, the harmonious tints, and the bright aërial hues of the sky, shed enchantment over every object, and make every scene a picture—the artist can be *guilty* of colouring so remote from the truth and beauty of Nature. Yet over France, and the whole of the continent, we may search in vain for any thing like excellence in landscape painting. To portrait

painting the same remark applies. There is not an artist at present in the world to compare with our own. I only wish that the best works of the best living artists, of every foreign country, were placed by the side of those of Laurence, and Turner, and Williams, of Edinburgh, and I well know to which every judge of painting would at once adjudge the preference.

The works of Wilkie are confessedly unrivalled. Allan, that original and highly promising artist, also stands alone; and Morland, whose works are contemporary with those of living artists, may be placed upon a par with Rosa di Tivoli.

The engravers of Rome have made themselves so justly celebrated by their works, that they do not require my feeble tribute of praise. I consider Morghen unrivalled; but with that one exception, I think some of our engravers at home would not suffer by a comparison with any here. But it is invidious to quarrel about degrees of excellence, where all are so good.

In this, as in most other branches of art, we see that Rome is the nurse, rather than the mother of genius. It is her adopted children who form her glory.

There are many minor fine arts practised at Rome, which are wholly unknown in England. The most remarkable of them is the Mosaic Manufactory, upon which I believe I have touched before. It is about to be removed into a vacant Palazzo, which is preparing for its reception, but at present it continues to be carried on in the pa-

lace of the Holy Office at Rome, from which the Inquisition was ousted by the French, and into which it is to be reinstated by the present government. Indeed, the papers and archives belonging to it, are already conveyed back into some of the vacant chambers of this immense building. That worthy tribunal, however, holds its sittings in the Convent of the Minerva.

The Inquisition at Rome has always been remarkable for its mildness; and, compared with the horrible and tyrannical iniquity of the same tribunal at Venice and Madrid, it deserves the epithet of lenient. Nothing, however, can alter its nature; or make a court, whose proceedings are secret—whose decision is absolute—whose judges are not accountable—whose information is derived from insidious spies—whose accusers are concealed, and unconfronted with the accused—who can inflict imprisonment and torture to any extent on the unconvicted;—nothing can make such an institution as this any thing but an execrable and diabolical engine of cruelty, injustice, and oppression, worthy of the invention of Lucifer himself.

But I have got into a passion—and into the Inquisition, instead of the Mosaic Manufactory. It is carried on under the direction of Signore Camuccini, and at the cost of government; and its fruits are theirs. The workmen are constantly employed in copying paintings, for the altar pieces of churches. I grieved to see such as Camuccini's, —though one of his best, the Incredulity of St Thomas,—copying at this immense expence, when the

works of the first masters are fast mouldering away on the walls of forgotten churches. They will soon be lost for ever; it is yet possible to render them imperishable by means of mosaic copies; and why is it not done?

The French, at Milan, set an example of this, by copying, in mosaic, the Last Supper of Leonardo da Vinci; but it was their plan to do much for Milan, and nothing for Rome; and the invaluable frescos of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Domenichino, and Guido, were left to perish. Neither has it ever seemed any object to the papal government, to copy the paintings that are perishing, and very many of those that have been executed in mosaic, are in no danger of being destroyed, and not very much worth preserving.

It takes about seven or eight years to finish a mosaic copy of a painting of the ordinary historical size, two men being constantly employed. It generally costs from eight to ten thousand crowns, but the time and expence are regulated, of course, by the intricacy of the subject and quantity of work.

Raphael's Transfiguration cost about 12,000 crowns, and the labour of nine years; ten men constantly working at it. The late works seem to me of very inferior execution to the copies of Guido's Archangel, Guercino's Santa Petronilla, and many of that date.

The slab upon which the mosaic is made, is generally formed of Travertine stones, connected together by iron cramps. Upon the surface of

this a mastic, or cementing paste, is gradually spread, as the progress of the work makes it wanted, which forms the adhesive ground, or bed, on which the mosaic is laid. This mastic is composed of lime burnt from marble, and finely powdered Travertine stone, mixed to the consistence of a strong paste, with linseed oil. Into this paste are stuck the smalti (*smalti,*) of which the mosaic picture is formed. They are a species of opake vitrified glass, partaking of the mixed nature of stone and glass, and composed of a variety of minerals and materials, coloured, for the most part, with different metallic oxyds. Of these, no less than seventeen hundred different shades are in use; they are manufactured in Rome in the form of long slender rods like wires, of different degrees of thickness, and are cut into pieces of the requisite sizes, from the smallest pin point to an inch. When the picture is completely finished, and the cement thoroughly dried, it is highly polished.

This mosaic work, during the two years that I have known Rome, seems to proceed in that creeping indolent manner in which all undertakings go on here, if they go on at all. Few workmen are employed, and those work little. This manufactory now, in all the world, exists only in Rome; for the establishment in Milan, founded by the French, has fallen with them, and its immediate abolition is decreed by the Austrian government.

Mosaic, though an ancient art, is not merely revived, but an improved one; for the Romans

only used coloured marbles, or natural stones, in its composition, which admitted of comparatively little variety; but the invention of smalts has given it a far wider range, and made the imitation of painting far closer.

The mosaic work at Florence is totally different to this, being merely inlaying in *pietre dure*, or natural precious stones, of every variety, which forms beautiful, and very costly imitations of shells, flowers, figures, &c., but bears no similitude to painting.

Besides this government establishment at Rome, there are hundreds of artists, or artisans, who carry on the manufactory of mosaics on a small scale. Snuff-boxes, rings, necklaces, broaches, ear-rings, &c., are made in immense quantity; and since the English flocked in such numbers to Rome, all the streets leading to the Piazza di Spagna, are lined with the shops of these *Musaicisti*, &c.

Oriental shells are made at Rome into beautiful cameos, by the white outer surface being cut away upon the deeper coloured internal part, forming figures in minute bassi rilievi. The subjects are chiefly taken from ancient gems, and sometimes from sculpture and painting. The shells used for this purpose are chiefly brought from the Levant. The most celebrated artist in this curious branch of art, which is peculiar to Rome, is Dies. These shell cameos make remarkably beautiful ornaments.

The modern gems of the Pichlers, Natali, &c., are so well known, and so nearly approach to the perfection of the best Grecian ones, that I need

say nothing in their praise. Though these celebrated artists are now dead, many of the living ones at Rome, are little inferior to them, both in cameo and intaglio. Their subjects are sometimes taken from the paintings of great masters; but more frequently from ancient or modern sculpture.

Besides those, hundreds of artists find support at Rome, in making casts, sulphurs, &c., from ancient gems and medals, and in selling or fabricating antiques. Marble and stone-cutting, are also beautifully executed both at Rome and Florence.

If the fine arts prosper in Rome, the useful arts are in a woefully degenerate state. The poor, useless, unworkmanlike style in which every thing of common life, every handicraft trade, is got through here, strikes one with much surprise. It is very bad, even compared to France, and what a contrast to England! Even jewellery is miserably finished here. Except in Paris, or in London, you will meet with no handsome work in gold and silver, or see one handsome jeweller's shop.

What do you say to the jewellers of
ucon, Madam? certainly amon
first in Europe - Rome to
ne admirable jewellers —

LETTER XC.

HADRIAN'S VILLA.

We left Rome this morning for Tivoli, by the Porta San Lorenzo. Three miles from it we crossed the Ponte Mammolo, over the Anio, or Teverone, whose sleepy course is here unconscious of beauty, and proceeded through the dreary waste of the Campagna, for ten long miles further, without meeting any passengers—excepting two or three beggars—or seeing a single sign of human habitation or of life;—though mementoes of death in abundance stared us in the face; for, besides the ruined tombs, black crosses by the way-side marked the frequent spots where murder had been committed. Artificial caves, hollowed out in the soft pozzolana rock, that bounded the road, were pointed out to us as the frequent lurking-place of assassins. So poor, however, and so few, seem to be the passengers between Rome and Tivoli, that I should suppose these murderers would get nothing but blood for their pains—and but little of that.

Longing for some object to break the tedium of the way, we looked out with great earnestness for

"the Lake of Tartarus," which we were to pass; but it was not from our eyes that we had the first indication of our approach to it; for we scented it from afar in such offensive effluvia, that every foul and fœtid odour seemed congregated in one potent stench, which increased every moment till we passed the spot. Lake there is none. Excepting one muddy pool, the thick viscid waters are dried up, or encrusted with a hard uneven substance, of an arid yellow colour, on which patches of stunted bushes were growing. The wide extent of this hideous crust, marked the ancient surface of "the Tartareous Lake." Reeds, roots of plants, all things of vegetable kind that grow near it, are rapidly changed, by its petrifying quality, into stone. The masses of rock all round it are of this curious fibrous texture. Near this dismal lake stands a ruined Gothic fortress, called Castello Archione.

As we proceeded on our way, the fumes still continued to increase, till, at the distance of about two miles, we reached the artificial bed of a foul blue fluid,—for I cannot call it water,—which flowed across the road, conducted from the celebrated sulphureous lake about a mile distant, to drain which it has been cut. In part it has succeeded, and besides, it is the nature of such waters to diminish, so that the ancient size of this lake is now greatly reduced. We left the carriage to walk to it, and on our way we picked up a bare-legged Cicerone, a poor goat-herd, who told us all he knew about it,—and more. Arrived on the brink of the filthy flood, he embarked himself upon it on a little

floating island of about two feet diameter, which was near the shore, and by the help of a long stick, navigated himself about in this new species of vessel. Several of these floating islands, some of much larger dimensions, were dispersed over the pond; they are formed by the petrified plants cohering together in the sulphureous water, which possesses the same petrifying property as the Tartareous Lake. Several rustics had, by this time, collected round us, all of whom assured us that the lake is bottomless. That, however, is not the case, though it is very deep, and in one place measures upwards of thirty fathoms. They threw in stones, and made us observe how it boiled, as they called it. It certainly bubbled for several minutes afterwards with great activity, which arose, I presume, from the sulphurated gas being rapidly disengaged from the bottom by the percussion of the stone, and rising through the water. In the morning, at sun-rise, they assured us it spontaneously throws up these bubbles, and is quite covered with mist and steam. The water, though rather higher than the ordinary temperature, is quite cold to the touch. The peasants told us the quarries of Tiburtine stone were near the lake, and assured us that some ruins on its margin,—apparently the remains of some of the baths which were much frequented for medical purposes in the days of the Romans,—were the palace of Queen Zenobia. But though that royal captive, after gracing Aurelian's triumph, did take up her abode in the neighbourhood of Tibur, one would

scarcely imagine she would chuse to plant herself on the brink of this Pandæmonium.

Here are now no vestiges of the Sacred Grove and Temple of the Faun, who, in the days of the pious Æneas and his father-in-law, was the oracle of the whole country. I do think the old Latin monarch must have passed rather an uncomfortable night on the margin of this pestilent basin, in spite of his bed of a hundred sheep-skins; when he went to dream of the expediency of the future nuptials of Turnus and Lavinia.*

Soon after leaving the lake, we reached the Ponte Lucano, a spot so well known in picture, that I need scarcely describe it. It owes all its picturesque effect to the tower close by the bridge; for the Anio here, though shaded by trees, is nothing in itself. This tower, as the inscriptions upon it prove, is the tomb of M. Plautius and his family It nearly resembles that of Cecilia Metella; like that, it is built of Tiburtine stone, and like that, it bears on its summit the walls and fortifications which were raised in the days of feudal warfare. It

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* At rex, sollicitus monstris (Lavinia's hair taking fire, &c.) oracula Fauni
Fatidici genitoris, adit, lucosque sub alta
Consulit Albunea; nemorum quæ maxima sacro
Fonte sonat, sævamque exhalat opaca mephitim.
Hinc Italæ gentes, omnisque Oenotria tellus,
In dubiis responsa petunt: huc dona sacerdos
Quum tulit, et cæsarum ovium sub nocte silenti
Pellibus incubuit stratis, Somnosque petivit.
ÆN. lib. VII.

differs, however, in having had a front towards the road, composed of six Corinthian columns, some broken remains of which are still visible, and in not having had a sculptured frieze. It was built in the days of Vespasian.

The Ancients were right in making a circle the symbol of eternity, not only from its having no termination, but because of its durability. Excepting the Pyramids, almost all the ancient buildings that remain entire, are circular. Not to mention the Coliseum, and the Amphitheatre of Verona, and the Sepulchre of Augustus,—which, by great exertions, have been in part destroyed,—the Pantheon, the Tomb of Hadrian, of Cecilia Metella, and of Munatius Plancus at Molo di Gaieta, are the most perfect remains of antiquity which our times can boast.

To the left of the Ponte Lucano, are some unknown ruins, apparently of Roman villas, and near them an ancient consular road may still be traced. We soon after passed, on the right of the road, the remains of two Roman tombs, on one of which is the common sepulchral rilievo of a man holding his horse by the bridle. Some people have called these the lodges to Hadrian's magnificent villa, but a little attentive observation will make their sepulchral destination sufficiently obvious.

Soon afterwards, we turned off to the right, and a short mile of bad rocky road brought us to the present entrance to the ruins of Hadrian's wonderful villa. It is situated on the plain at the foot of the hill of Tivoli; and, according to the writers

of antiquity, covered an extent of three miles with its multiplied structures, its gardens, and its appurtenances. It rather resembled a city in itself than a single mansion. We know that Hadrian imitated here every thing which had struck his fancy during his travels, and that the buildings and institutions of Egypt, Syria, and Greece, were assembled within its walls.*

These proud imperial ruins are now lost among thick olive groves; their floors, instead of being paved with pictured mosaics, are overgrown with grass; their broken reticulated walls, are overhung with wild creeping plants; and their once-magnificent halls are filled with thickets of aged ilex and overshadowed by mournful cypresses, and pine-trees; yet enough still remain to attest their former extent and splendour.

The house of the Custode, on the left in entering, which is dignified by the title of a Casino, is built on some of the ancient walls. Close by it is a building with some niches for statues, and an arched recess for a fountain, the walls of which are covered with petrifactions. There is also a room, the roof of which is adorned with beautiful indented stucco, in patterns resembling arabesque, and in wonderful preservation. On the right is a theatre; the eye can still trace the semi-circular ranges of seats, the porticos below them, the proscenium, and

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* Vide Spartianus.

the orchestra, in the middle of which a colossal torso of a marble statue, supposed to have been of Hadrian, was lying on the ground. We trod the grass-grown stage, and disturbed from their ancient haunts,—not the Tragic nor the Comic muse, nor yet the ranting mask with his cothurnus, that had so often "fretted his little hour upon this stage,"—but a company of black hooded crows, whose hoarse complaining clamour now alone resounds here, instead of the dialogues of Plautus or Terence. Near it is the Hippodrome, a large open oblong space, for equestrian exercises, &c., now an olive grove; yet, in its broken walls, the niches for the statues that once ornamented it, may still be traced.

We proceeded down a long green avenue of tall cypress-trees, to the *Poecile*, a double portico, built in imitation of the Poecile of Athens, so called, from the variety of the paintings with which it was adorned.* All that now remains of it, consists of the lofty reticulated wall, nearly six hundred feet in length, on either side of which was a portico, supported by marble columns. Thus the poets and philosophers, who took their daily promenade here, and with whom Hadrian often used to mingle, could choose at pleasure its sunny or shady side.

The south side commands a view of a large open space, supposed to have been a sort of parade for the troops to exercise in; and in the centre are re-

* Pausanias, lib. i. c. 15, and Pliny, l. xxxv. c. 9.

mains of a sort of Loggia, said to have been the station of the Emperor when he reviewed them.

A ruined semi-circle to the left of the Poecile, is called the Temple of the Seven Wise Men of Greece, because of its having seven niches for statues; although it bears no very decided appearance of ever having been a temple at all, and looks quite as like the upper end of a large hall. Then follows an immense Rotonda, or circular building, which, because some marine monsters were observed among the paintings on the walls, is called a Marine Theatre. In the centre are some vestiges of a small building. In one part of the circle there is a recess, and opposite, about half-way up, are some traces of a roof, as if a corridor had run round it, which perhaps served also as a gallery.

Not far off is a vaulted grotto, with six niches in it, which our Cicerone called a fountain, and maintained had supplied this maritime theatre,—just as effectually, certainly, as a pump would fill the sea.

Near the Rotonda are the remains of what are supposed to have been the Libraries, one Greek, and the other Latin. They have been two stories in height, and old people say, they remember a ruined staircase which led to the upper one, but there is now no trace of it left. Both here, and in some small adjacent apartments, we observed some vestiges of ancient paintings, almost obliterated; a vase, with flames rising from it, was all I could make out.

Beyond these, we passed through what they call the Hospital, with divisions, as if for beds; and at

its extremity we came upon a Loggia, or elevated seat, from which we looked down on the beautiful *artificial* Vale of Tempe: Deserted and neglected as it is, the deep verdure of the carpet that covers it, the tall cypress-trees that shade it, and the aged ilex that wreathe round the ruins which hang over it—deep rooted in their massy walls—have, in their wildness and luxuriancy of vegetation, a beauty and a charm beyond all that the most laboured efforts of art could have bestowed.

Near here there seems to have been a Stadium for foot-races. Two semi-circular buildings, apparently baths, have been christened the Temples of Venus and Diana, although the *four* alcoves for statues within, are of *equal* size and importance; consequently it is very improbable they have ever been dedicated to any one deity. Many are the scattered and unknown ruins to which not even antiquarian ingenuity has been able to affix a name. From these, let us proceed to what has obviously formed a part of the palace itself: It consists of a great number of apartments, of various dimensions,—some very large and noble,—and has evidently been two stories high; but how the lower story was lighted, is certainly rather puzzling, for there is no appearance of windows. Possibly this range of rooms was only frequented at night, and therefore was only lighted by lamps; but there may have been another cause for it. The walls are in many places double, with a vacant space between them. This cannot have been intended as a pre-

caution against damp in a climate such as this; and it is more reasonably supposed to have been a defence against the scorching blasts of the Sirocco; and possibly the whole of this lower story was built without windows for the same reason, to serve as a cool retreat during the long continuance of this sultry wind in summer. The upper story was probably lighted from the roof. We observed a corridor which has evidently been so, for the square apertures at the top still remain.

The most interesting part of the ruins of the dwelling-house is the Cavædium, or open court, forming a fine oblong square, round which runs a corridor, supported by a noble colonnade; and in the centre, where a fountain formerly flowed, a lofty pine-tree has sprung up, throwing around its broad canopy of shade. We still traced here some faint vestiges of ancient painting and mosaic pavement. Not far from hence are those very magnificent ruins, called the Quarters of the Prætorian Guard, which form an immense oblong square, and consist of arches four stories high. Some of the apartments seem to have been very small: Four large rooms at the end are remarkably elegant. The stucco ornaments of the vaulted roofs are, in many parts, in high preservation, and beautifully executed,—almost with the effect of rilievo.

Perhaps the most curious remains of Hadrian's Villa are the Canopus, and Naumachia, supposed to be an imitation of the famous Egyptian Temple, near Alexandria. The Naumachia is an oblong

square, nearly 600 feet in length, which has evidently been filled to a certain height with water; at the upper end of it is the Canopus, or temple of that deity, in the form of a semi-circle, with an alcove like a fountain at the top, the seat of Canopus, the Egyptian Neptune, from which the water rushed down the rapid descent into the Naumachia. In the sides are niches for statues, and here the Egyptian sculpture at the Capitol was found. Behind the Temple of Canopus are covered channels for water; small secret chambers, supposed to have been intended for the convenience of the priests, and a very remarkable semicircular gallery, with conduits in the walls for water, lighted from above. The ceiling is painted, but the designs can scarcely be traced. From the remains of buildings on one side of the Naumachia, and some corresponding vestiges on the other, it would seem that an elevated gallery, or corridor, has surrounded it, for spectators to view the naval games, mock-fights, races, &c., of this grand Aquatic Theatre.

The Cicerone of this villa next conducted us to the schools and the habitations of the philosophers, which he seemed to be as well acquainted with as if he had lived among them; and then carried us to what he denominated the Baths of the Women, (the Baths of the Men had been already shewn to us in a different part of the grounds,) which are really elegant buildings. Amongst these are small apartments, two stories high, called the baths, in the front of which are a hall and a rotonda. Not far from hence are the Cento Camerelle: They

consist of about one hundred and fifty small arched apartments, or substructions, made to support the hill, in some places of two, in others of three stories, according to the varying height of the ground. They are all arched, and plaistered at the top, to resemble hewn stone, though built of reticulated work; they have no light but from the entrance, and no communication with each other, and are all the same size, excepting one large circular room, at the angle of the hill, probably for the commanding officer; for they are supposed, and probably with reason, to have served as barracks for soldiers.

At the Rocca Brune, there is a dark circular building, not worth describing, called the Temple of Minerva. Near it are the Elysian Fields—which present a most melancholy aspect. Some narrow stagnant canals, like ditches, may have been meant for Cocytus, &c. and are certainly Stygian in hue; but the infernal gods, and Ixion on his whistling wheel, were found here, and this serves to identify the place.

The Temple of Apollo, at a distance, on high ground, rising from the woods which embosom it, had a very striking and picturesque effect as we approached it, the golden sky of evening shining through the yawning chasms in its walls. It is said, the statues of Apollo and the Muses, now in the Vatican, were found here.

To attempt to form a regular plan of the roofless and broken walls of this once magnificent imperial palace, seems now to be the extreme of ab-

surdity ; yet many have been executed by Ligorio, Kircher, Ré, and others, which may be had at Rome.

We left it at last with regret, after having spent many hours in wandering among its ruins and its groves.

The destruction of the Villa Adriana, though not yet consummated, was early commenced. Caracalla began to despoil it of its exquisite sculptures, and, from that time forward, it seems to have been abandoned to decay, and its wonders of art, its glories of antiquity, have perished along with it. Even the most portable of these, the master-pieces of statuary, have been buried in its ruins; and after serving as a quarry of the fine arts for ages, it probably still contains treasures destined to astonish future generations.

LETTER XCI.

TIVOLI—CASCADES—GROTTO OF NEPTUNE—SYREN'S CAVE—TEMPLE OF THE SYBIL, AND OTHER REMAINS OF ANTIQUITY—TOUR OF THE HILL—VILLA OF MÆCENAS—LUCIEN BUONAPARTE'S MANUFACTORIES—RUINED VILLAS OF THE ANCIENT ROMANS—EXCURSION TO HORACE'S SABINE FARM—MAJESTIC RUINS OF THE AQUEDUCTS.

THE beauty of Tivoli consists in its rocks and waterfalls. It is to the Anio,—still the "præceps Anio,"—that it owes it all. And yet this is sufficient to constitute the most enchanting scenes. Amidst the dreary wilds of the Campagna, you would never dream that a spot so romantic was at hand. For twenty tedious miles you cross its bare and houseless track—you ascend the hill of Tivoli, amidst the sad sameness of the pale olive—you enter the narrow street, and behold nothing but meanness and misery—you walk but a few steps, and what a prospect of unspeakable beauty bursts upon your view! Tremendous precipices of rock, down which roars a headlong torrent—trees and

bushy plants shading its foaming course,—cliffs crowned with the most picturesque ruins, and painted in tints whose beauty art can never imitate,—hills, and woods, and hanging vineyards; and Tivoli itself—which, peeping out amidst the dark cypresses at the top of these sunny banks, looks like an earthly paradise.

I deal little in description—for words are insufficient to convey an idea of the beauties and varieties of Nature. The pencil only can describe Tivoli; and though unlike other scenes, the beauty of which is generally exaggerated in picture, no representation has done justice to it—it is yet impossible that some part of its peculiar charms should not be transferred upon the canvas. It almost seems as if Nature had herself turned painter, when she formed this beautiful and perfect composition.

Having viewed the fall from above, we descended the long steep precipice by a zig-zag path to the Grotto of Neptune, a cave at the bottom, hollowed out in the worn and petrified rock, by the boiling flood which for ages has beat against it, and on the brink of that tremendous gulf which receives it. The contrast between the white silvery foam of the waters in the fall, and their Stygian blackness as soon as they reach this still and deep abyss, is most striking. It is like the torrent of life swallowed up in the gulf of death. And like the promise of immortality, as we gazed upon it, there sprung up a bright and beautiful rainbow, shooting across the spray, and connecting earth

with heaven in a radiant arch of glory. Upon this painted arch, it is fabled that the messengers of the gods, and the angels of light, have descended from the skies; and may it not to us, in fancy, open the passage to brighter worlds?—It is the arch of promise, and seems set in heaven to reassure guilty man, that to the height from which he has fallen by sin, he may reascend by faith.

But I must turn from the fall of man to the fall of water—or, rather the falls—for here there are two; one formed by a small branch of the river, the other by its main body. Their united streams rush onward, and precipitate themselves into a tremendous abyss beneath a natural bridge of rock, called the Ponte del Lupo. This wonderful view can only be seen from the Syren's cave, to which we descended on the opposite side of the river, by a path continually wet with the dew of the spray, and so steep and slippery, that to save ourselves from falling, we had to cling to the bushes which fringe the sides of the precipice. At length we reached the Syren's Cave. But what a prospect is there!—From these hollow dripping rocks, on the very brink of the impetuous torrent, which almost laves our feet as it foams along, we look up to the thundering cataracts above us, almost deafened with their ceaseless roar—and look down into the shuddering unseen depths of that dark abyss, which yawns beneath to swallow up the foaming waters.

Never shall I forget the view from the Syren's Cave. The tremendous cataracts above, the fear-

ful gulf below—the depth of which our shuddering sight vainly seeks to fathom; the roar, the rage, the strife of the maddening waters, impelled onward as if by an irresistible destiny to their terrific doom; the narrow step that separates us from their sweeping fury, hovering as we stand on the brink of perdition. No!—words can never speak its sublimity!

To me a mighty cataract has always seemed the most sublime of all the terrors of Nature. There is something in its continuity, and its unabating rage, which strikes our soul with awe and wonder. All things else in Nature change and perish, and all that are the most fraught with force and power, are the most evanescent—excepting this. The tempests of the ocean pass away—the thunder-storm endures but for a time—the dread hurricane is soon at rest—the volcano's red streams of liquid fire grow cold, and are extinguished—and the earthquake itself, that shakes the foundations of the earth, and swallows up whole nations in its yawning womb, is but the convulsion of a day. But we behold the ceaseless fall of that torrent, which has held on its raging course from the beginning of time, and will continue till its latest close,—which knows no rest, no stop, no change—by night and by day—in storm and in sunshine—the same in every moment of the past and the future—yesterday, to-day, and forever!

Few can stand on that giddy brink, without horror and trepidation! Such is the roar of the waters, that the voices of my companions were un-

heard; and such the extreme cold produced by the rapid evaporation of the thick showers of spray, that on a day of intense heat, our teeth chattered in our heads.

The river emerging below from this deep abyss, rushes foaming down the rocky winding dell, forming in its course other falls, and receiving those of a third branch of the Anio, which, separated above the town, flows round it, and foams down the precipice at the Villa of Mæcenas, in many a glittering cascade, to join its parent stream.

Tivoli itself is lost from below. We might be amidst the remotest solitudes of Nature; but the airy temple of the Sybil on the cliff above, overhanging the flood, recalls the works of man in all their ancient greatness, and the times when he himself was great.

This beautiful temple, which stands on the very spot where the eye of taste would have placed it, and on which it ever reposes with delight, is one of the most attractive features of the scene, and perhaps gives to Tivoli its greatest charm. One cannot but marvel at the inconceivable barbarism of the Goth, that, after gazing upon it in a spot like this, would have packed it up and carried it away, to bury it in an obscure park in England.*

* The late Lord Bristol—that man of taste—formed this project, and actually bought it of the innkeeper in whose yard it stands, and was proceeding to have it packed up to send to England, (every stone numbered, so as to re-erect it,) when luckily the government interposed, declared Roman ruins to be public property, and as such prohibited its removal.

Independent of the situation, it may serve as a model of architecture, so perfect and so exquisitely beautiful are its design, its symmetry, and proportions. It is believed to be of the Augustan age. The small circular cella is surrounded with a portico, which has formerly consisted of eighteen Corinthian columns, of which ten only are now standing. Fortunately they are left on the side most essential to the beauty of the view; and those which are fallen, perhaps tend to give it the interest and picturesque character of a ruin, without destroying its beauties as a building. The foliage of the capitals is of the olive; the frieze is sculptured with ram's heads, and festoons of flowers; and it is remarkable that the columns, which are of Tiburtine stone, have no plinths.

It is the fashion now, merely because it is circular, to call it the Temple of Vesta. But this was one of the most common forms of ancient temples, and by no means exclusively appropriated to that goddess. Why, therefore, may not the famous Temple of the Sybil have been circular also? Does it not exactly answer to the situation? Is it not still "Albunea* Alta?" the "Domus Albuneæ Resonantis?"

Not far from it are the remains of another ancient temple, of an oblong form, now metamorphosed into the Church of St Giorgio, with a por-

* I need scarcely observe, that Albunea, the Tiburtine Sybil, was one of the ten gifted maids, whose books of prophecy were preserved in the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and received as the Oracles of Italy.

tico of four Ionic columns in front. A sepulchral figure of a man on a tomb, which was found here, and also the Anio reclining on his urn, were each in turn christened the Sybil; and this building is now, by all the erudite, called the Temple of the Sybil. It may as probably have been any one of the many temples that adorned ancient Tibur.

We are told to look for the site of the Temple of Hercules, where the Cathedral now stands, and we may fancy it where we please. Augustus, who generally spent the summer here, used to sit in its portico to administer justice.*

Tibur was the town sacred to Hercules;† so, indeed, was almost every neighbouring place and scene; not excepting early Rome itself. But the antiquity of Tibur goes as far back as the light of history. It can be traced more than five hundred years before Rome had a name, and its origin is lost in the obscurity of fable.‡

Still, in the town arms, it calls itself "Superbum Tibur,"§ though a more wretched place can hardly be conceived.

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* Suetonius, in Vit. August.

† Urbs Herculi sacra.—Suet. in Vit. Calig.

‡ Strabo, as well as the poets, ascribes it to Greek colonies:

"Tibur Argeo positum Colono."

HORACE, lib. ii. Ode 4.

"- - - jam mœnia Tiburis udi,
Stabant, Argolicæ quæ posuere manus."

OVID, Fast. iv. 71.

§ Virgil. Æn. l. vii. v. 627.

But enough of antiquities. Mounted on asses we made the tour of the hill. We first cross the Anio by a wooden bridge, in face of a cascade, which at any other place would be loudly extolled, but at Tivoli is never even named,—then wind along the steep side of the hill,—its olive-crowned banks rising steep above, and the river roaring in its rocky bed below. In the whole of this delightful little tour, of about two miles, we see almost at every step a new and beautiful picture. The cascades at the grotto of Neptune,—the temples, the caves, the rocks, the woods, and the ruins, appear in continually varying combinations of beauty. The spring was out in all its joy and freshness. The flush of Nature, the young green of the tender foliage, the banks tufted with violets, the trees glowing with blossom, the song of the birds, the sweet smell of the flower of the vines, and the brightness and luxuriance of vegetation, made one's heart bound with joy.

We descended the precipitous bank, nearly to the bed of the river, to see the *gran' cascatelle*, as our rustic Ciceroni called the beautiful broken fall, or falls, which the river makes below. They assured us the whole is a hundred and eighty feet in height; be this as it may, it forms one of the most enchanting and picturesque scenes in the world. I cannot say quite so much for the long small straggling *cascatelle* which come tottering and tumbling down the face of the rock, at the Villa of Mæcenas—like long silver hairs, "streaming like a me-

teor to the troubled air;"—though they, too, are beautiful; and seen, as we first beheld them, gleaming through the trees, with the long arcades of the ruined villa above, they had a very striking effect. We crossed the river by the Pontecelli, and re-ascended its opposite bank to the town, by the Via Valeria, the ancient Consular Way, and high-road between Rome and Tivoli. Parts of its original construction,—huge, flat, irregular blocks of stone, fitted closely in to each other, like the Appian Way, still remain.

We stopped to examine *il Templo della Tosse*,* as the people of Tivoli call a picturesque ruin of hexagonal form, overhung with wild shrubs and evergreens, with four arched entrances, windows, and niches for statues, within and without. Bearing a considerable resemblance to the Temple of Minerva Medica, it has equally puzzled the antiquarians, some of whom call it a bath, some a temple, and some a tomb.

Two other vestiges of ruins, supposed to have been sepulchres, near here, are, from their form, called (*Gli Pilastri*) the buttresses of Tivoli.

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* Temple of the Cough. Great antiquarians have doubted that there could be so absurd a deity; I cannot see why diseases might not be as reasonably deified as vices, which were common objects of worship among the Romans; nor why there might not as well be a temple to cough on the Anio, as to fever on the Palatine. Besides, as the air of Tibur was noted for its salubrity, it was probably famous for its cure of cough; and so a temple for sacrifices, prayers, propitiation, and thanksgiving to it, would naturally arise here.

On the other side of the road, close to the town, we entered the Villa of Mecænas. It is quite certain, that Mecænas had a villa here, and wholly impossible to prove either that this was, or was not it. Whatever it was, the remains are very extensive, and the situation singularly fine. It stands on the highest ridge of the height, overlooking, on one side, the far-extended plains of the Campagna, with Rome in the distance, bounded by purple mountains; and on the other, the deep romantic dell of the rushing river, with all its waterfalls, its woods, its rocks, its ruins, and its caves.

On the side of Rome, you still see the arches under which passed the public road, and the Doric porticos, looking to the Anio, are in high preservation. The style of building, which consists of small stones fitted curiously together, is very remarkable. These arcades and porticos; the large open court, or cavædium; the Atrium; the chambers opening upon it; the second story, to which we can still ascend; the lofty subterranean hall beneath; the massive arches of stone, and all the unenumerable and interesting vestiges we see, impress us with a high idea of the extent and magnificence of this ancient villa.

I grieve to say, that it is deformed by the greasy operations of a filthy oil mill, and the grimy apparatus of a gunpowder manufactory; together with the hideous wreck of an iron foundery, which luckily failed. The project was abandoned, but the dirt remains. All the black Elba iron stone, and the dross, and the cinders, and the abomination be-

longing to it, are still blackening every place, reflecting no great credit on the taste of the present proprietor,—Prince Lucien Buonaparte.*

Many were the ruins, or rather substructions, of Roman villas, which we had passed in our tour of the hill, and our rustic Cicerone did not fail to attach to each of them some celebrated Roman name, that had once possessed a retreat here. We did not, however, see *that* villa which Julius Cæsar sold to defray the expences of his Ædileship, nor that in which his own murder was planned by Brutus and Cassius;† but we saw the Villa of Horace, though I see little reason to imagine he ever had a villa at Tibur; for he was poor, and his Sabine farm was only twelve miles off; and when he resided there, and sang the beauties of Tibur, it was probably at the country houses of Mecænas and his other friends. We saw, too, the Villa of Quintilius Varus, still called *Quintiliolo;* and of Catullus, which bears the name of *Truglia*, and accords tolerably well with his own description. To these two, therefore, we may attach some credit; and we saw the villas of Lepi-

* I half suspect this smelting business, was only a pretext to enable Lucien Buonaparte to send vessels to Elba unsuspected, and so hold constant communication with his brother. It ceased with his flight from the island.

† Vide Suetonius' Life of Julius Cæsar. I was amused by the experience I had of the method of christening ruins here. On my first visit, I asked one of our Ciceroni, ironically, if he could not shew me this villa of Cassius, but he had no place for it; on my return in autumn, he accompanied us again, but, having forgotten me, he pointed to a heap of stones, saying, "Ecco gli avanzi creduto della Villa di Cassio."

dus, of the Poet Archias, of Piso, of Propertius, of Vopiscus, and of many more, which, I think, was enough in all reason.

We saw one which was more than enough,—a modern villa, a princely villa, and a most hideous villa,—the Villa d'Este. It was erected by the Cardinal Hyppolito d'Este, the nephew of the patron of Ariosto, and is really of a piece with the taste which his worthy uncle shewed in that famous speech he made to the poet, on returning the Orlando:—"Dove, Messer Ludovico, avete pigliato tutte queste coglionerie?"

One cannot but wonder who could have turned from the beautiful waterfalls of Tivoli, to invent these foolish water-works?—Who could have beheld these luxuriant shades and groves, and projected these clipt hedges and tormented trees?—Who, amidst all these enchanting beauties of Nature, could have collected together all these deformities of art? What strange depravity of taste! And yet stranger still, these wretched gardens are admired and imitated by the Italians!—They were, it seems, the first of the kind—the fruitful parent of all trees clipped into animals and cyphers, and all water converted into bushes and musical men—on which account I bear them a peculiar grudge, for I hold in utter abhorrence the whole of their monstrous and unnatural progeny.

Not under this definition, certainly, come the waterfalls of Tivoli itself, though you will be surprised to hear they are artificial. Sixtus V. made the cascade at the grotto of Neptune, as it now

stands. That most active of Popes, not satisfied with his indefatigable labours in art, set to work to alter Nature herself. However, he seems to have borne in mind, better than the Cardinal, the poet's precept,

"L'Arte che tutto fa, nulla si scopre,"* a

for the eye detects nothing of it, Nature seems unaided.†

I forgot to mention, that, on the way down to the Grotto of Neptune, there is a distinct impression of the segment of a modern cart wheel, in the solid rock. It is difficult to understand how such an immense body of stone should have been formed above it; since the very earliest period such a wheel *could* have been left here, and still more difficult otherwise to account for the phenomenon. We were told, too, that an ancient iron instrument had been extracted from the heart of a block of stone, some years ago. It certainly seems as if these precipices of rock had been deposited by the Anio, because it rapidly petrifies every substance left in its waters, and encrusts it with a deposit, which, both to the eye, and when subjected to chemical analysis, is precisely similar to the stone of which they are composed,—the Tiburtine or Travertine stone.

* Tasso.

† The same remark applies also to the famous Fall of Terni,—the Caduto del Marmore, which is likewise made by art. It is curious, too, that the waters of the Velino, as well as the Arno, have a powerfully petrifying quality.

This cart-wheel impression has made a great impression upon the Wernerians. They think it puts a spoke in the wheel of the Huttonian hypothesis. Far be it from me to enter upon the perilous field of geological controversy, and I scarcely venture to hint even to you, that I cannot but believe that *both* the elements of fire and water, so powerful in decomposition, had a considerable, and neither of them an exclusive share, in the composition of the globe. That there should be parties at all in matters of science, is at once ridiculous and lamentable; but I must leave the subject, and close my letter, which already so greatly exceeds all reasonable bounds, that I have no room to give you much account of the excursion to Horace's Sabine Farm. It is about twelve miles from Tivoli; the place is now called Licenza, corrupted, we may fancy, from Digentia. Little of the poet's mansion remains, excepting some Mosaic pavement, but the natural features of the scene are unchanged, and it well repaid the labour of the journey, to drink of the spring which he has described, to gaze upon the scenery which formed the daily objects of his contemplation, and to fancy we discovered all that had in turn been the theme of his song,—

> "Me quoties reficit gelidus Digentia rivus,
> "Quem Mandela bibit," &c. &c.
>
> HOR. Ep. 18. b. civ. l. 1.

Even if you have not sufficient leisure or patience to undertake this distant and fatiguing expedition, upon asses, the only steeds which Tivoli affords, I

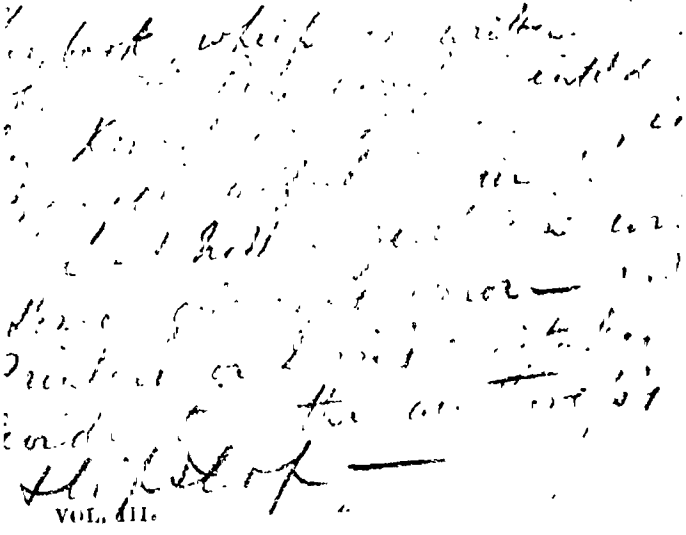
would recommend you, by all means, to visit the aqueducts, which are little more than a mile from the gate, (the Porta San Giovanni.) Here the noble arches of the Aqueduct of Claudius, thrown over the river and the road, built of immense blocks of Tiburtine stone, overgrown with ivy and wild brushwood; the lower, and still more ancient arches, immediately behind them, on the top of which stands a ruined Gothic tower, the remains of bloody feudal wars; the river rushing amid rocks, and crossed by a rustic bridge, forming a most *piquant* contrast to the stupendous arch of the great aqueduct, which also spans its bed; the road passing beneath another of its arches; the dark ivy, the ruined tower, the distant hills, the rocks, the woods, lighted up by the brilliant tints of the evening sky of Italy; with the groupe of ourselves, our asses, and our peasant guides, formed altogether one of the most picturesque scenes I ever beheld.

Beyond this, the aqueducts accompanied us a long way, now entering the hills, through which the water was carried in conduits, and again emerging; appearing and disappearing in this manner, sometimes three or four times in the space of half-a-mile; but the scenery becomes comparatively tame and uninteresting, and there is nothing worth seeing.

We left Tivoli at last with great regret. It is not merely its natural beauty, great as that is, that forms its strong attraction to every mind of taste and feeling. There is not a mouldering heap of

stone, that once formed the villa of a Roman, that does not recal those great names, and that bright age of antiquity, so dear to remembrance; nor a spot, that is not immortalized in the most classic strains of poesy. On scenes of beauty, such as these, we must ever gaze with admiration; but we view them with redoubled interest, when we think that the great in every age have also gazed upon them; and we feel that they possess a more powerful charm from having been the chosen retreat of those whose memory is consecrated among men.

The voices of its bards still seem to whisper in its winds, and murmur in its fountains; the muses still linger in its consecrated groves; and the spirits of its great philosophers still seem to hover round the mouldering walls of their ancient homes, and the forgotten sepulchres where their remains repose.



LETTER XCII.

FRASCATI—VILLAS OF THE MODERN ROMANS—CATO—PORCIAN MEADOWS—LAKE REGILLUS—RUINS, OF TUSCULUM—SITE OF CICERO'S VILLA—NEW EXCAVATIONS—TUSCULUM AND POMPEII—LUCIEN BUONAPARTE'S VILLA—TOMB AND VILLA OF LUCULLUS—MONUMENTS TO CARDINAL YORK AND THE PRETENDER.

If Tivoli was the favourite retreat of the ancient Romans, it is not so of the moderns. They leave its rocks, its caves, its woods, its waterfalls, and its ruins, to be gazed upon by peasant eyes—for none but rustics inhabit it; and for the most part, they fix their large, dull, formal, comfortless, country seats, in a cluster at Frascati; which may be a very pleasant place, but wants that living stream that gives Tivoli its charm, and all those classic ruins and remembrances, that invest it with a still higher interest. Frascati does not occupy the site of the ancient Tusculum, which was on the top of the hill, while it is built on the side, a mile at least from it; nor is there a single vestige of antiquity, or spot famed in classic lays, near its proud villas. But it

is only half the distance from Rome, and that is, perhaps, the greatest beauty to a people who consider rural life as banishment.

Frascati is said to have derived its name from the *Frasche*, or leafy boughs of trees, with which the unfortunate inhabitants of Tusculum constructed their huts, when their city was razed to the ground by the barbarous Romans, in the 12th century.* In *Frasche*, it may be said, they still live; for beautiful woods of arbutus, ilex, cypress, and stone pine, shade the stately villas which surround, and indeed almost compose Frascati.

We went through a most tiresome succession of these villas. They are all like large palaces, carried from the city into the country. Rooms of state, not of domestic habitation, and decorations, not conveniences, seem to prove that all is meant for shew, not use, and made to look at rather than to live in.

Out of doors, their little, circumscribed, artificial grounds; their clipped trees, formal theatres, bad statues, vile *guochi d'acqua*, tricks, and puppet-shows; are a wretched substitute for gardens, and pleasure-grounds, and extended parks, in all the bloom and luxuriance of "Nature to advantage dressed." At the Villa Ludovisi, now Conti, we

* In the year 1187. A few years previous to this, the Tusculans had defended their city bravely from the attacks of the Romans, whom they had defeated, when led on by Frederic Barbarossa, with immense loss.

saw long waterfalls stotting down stone steps, in a most leisurely manner, and divers *guochi d'acqua* of different species. But at the Villa Aldobrandini, or Belvedere, we were introduced to the most multifarious collection of monsters I hope ever to behold. Giants, centaurs, fauns, cyclops, wild beasts, and gods, blew, bellowed, and squeaked, without mercy or intermission; and horns, pans-pipes, organs, and trumpets, set up their combined notes in such a dissonant chorus, that we were fain to fly before them; when the strains that suddenly burst forth from Apollo and the nine Muses, who were in a place apart, compelled us to stop our ears, and face about again in the opposite direction.

When this horrible din was over, (and it was put an end to at our earnest supplication,) we were carried back to admire the now silent Apollo and Muses,—a set of painted wooden dolls, seated on a little mossy Parnassus, in a summer house,—a play-thing we should have been almost ashamed to have made even for the amusement of children. All these creatures, in the mean time, were spouting out water. The lions and tygers, however contrary to their usual habits, did nothing else; and the "great globe itself," which Atlas was bearing on his shoulders, instead of "the solid earth," proved a mere aqueous ball, and was overwhelmed in a second deluge. I was sitting patiently on one of the steps at the door, waiting the pleasure of my companions to depart, when, to their inexpressible amusement, water suddenly began to spirt up be-

neath me, and all round about me, drenching me with a shower from the earth, instead of the skies.

The view from this villa is beautiful; and there are some frescos in the rooms, said to be very fine; but whether my admiration was chilled by my cold bath, or whether they really are not very admirable, I did not think them so.

The Villa Mondragone has more windows than days in the year; I ought rather to speak in the past tense, for, about eighteen years ago, it was despoiled by Neapolitan brigands, and has now scarcely any windows at all. I saw nothing but the colossal bust of the younger Faustina, lying neglected on the ground among rubbish; the head severed from the neck. The famous bust of Antinous, (the finest in the world,) which also belonged to this villa, was carried off by the French, as a part of the Borghese Collection, and still remains in the Louvre.

The ride to Mondragone, through magnificent avenues of ilex, is truly beautiful. From the grounds near it, Monte Algido, once the seat of the ancient city of Algidum,* now covered with woods, the haunt of notorious robbers; rears its neighbouring height. Monte Porcio, on the west, the reputed birth-place of Cato, and the hereditary property of his family, is a highly interesting object. Below it, the country people pointed out to us the Porcian Meadows, the *Prati Porcii*, as they still call them.

* Vide Hor. lib. i. Od. 21.

They also shewed us Colonna, near which, and at the base of Monte Falcone, is the Lake Regillus,—now little better than a puddle,—so famed for the victory gained over the sons of Tarquin, when Castor and Pollux, after fighting in the ranks of the Roman army, brought the news of the victory with preternatural speed to Rome, and disappeared with their foaming steeds in the waters of the Lake Juturna.

At Frascati we mounted our asses, and ascended the hill to visit the site of Tusculum, having, with some difficulty, got the mob of ragged *Ciceroni* who flocked round us,—ambitious, not of the honour, but the profit of attending us,—reduced to one-half. Emerging from the woods which cover its lower part, we passed the Capuchin Convent, and soon began to remark the stones and weed-covered heaps that form the scattered remains of the city, whose name is famed throughout the civilized world.

The laurel flourishes at the Ruffinella, formerly the country house of the Jesuits, now Lucien Buonaparte's, and, in the opinion of many, once the site of Cicero's Tusculan Villa. It is situated high on the hill near the ruins of Tusculum, and, therefore, it certainly would seem a more probable situation for it than the Grotto Ferrata, two miles off, in the valley. Some bricks that were picked up here, inscribed with the name of Cicero, seem to give support to this opinion; for, if his villa had been at Grotto Ferrata, it is not probable that such heavy articles would have been brought from thence up this mountain, to add to the useless heaps that

were before lying here from the wreck and ruin of the city. We may, therefore, perhaps, indulge the belief that we really stand upon the site of the Villa of Cicero, and that the beautiful mosaic pavement found here, of a Minerva's head surrounded with masks, now in the Vatican, once belonged to it. At Grotto Ferrata, some remains of sculpture were found, but nothing conclusive, or, indeed, presumptive, of its being the true situation of Cicero's Villa.

Some people again have imagined, that he had one villa here, near the top of the hill, and another at the bottom, at Grotto Ferrata. It certainly seems improbable that he should have had two villas within two miles of each other; yet the Borghese family have now three within a circuit of the same extent. This hypothesis, at all events, pleased our guides the best, and they pointed out to us some ruins above the Ruffinella, consisting of a sort of portico, with two ranges of arches; and assured us, these were the real identical ruins of Cicero's upper villa, and that a subterranean way, of which they shewed us the mouth, leads under ground from hence to Grotto Ferrata, his lower villa. One of them declared he had advanced in it more than a mile, with a Russian, who would explore it, but that they were then obliged to turn back, being nearly suffocated;—a misfortune that might probably have happened to Cicero himself, if he had ever gone that road.

My learned donkey-driver and *Cicerone*,—for so he styled himself,—next pointed out to me some re-

mains of buildings, which he called "*La scuola di Ciccrone,*" (the school of Cicero,) a personage whom he seemed to think we never could have heard of; and he certainly gave us much new information concerning him, for he told us that he was "un gran' Maestro;"—not of philosophy or rhetoric,—but "of languages;" and that he taught a great many *Ragazzini,* (little boys)—*twenty-four* different tongues—not to mention reading, writing, and arithmetic!

It would have been impossible to have convinced him that Cicero was not a school-master. To this avocation, he assured us, *Ciccrone* added that of shewing all the *cose rare* of the place to strangers, —(like himself,)—on which account, he, our *Cicerone,* was called after him!

Among the shapeless heaps of ruin which cover the hill, the gradus of an ancient amphitheatre are very discernible, the lower parts of which are entirely overgrown with bushes and brambles. Our guide called it a *Colosseo,* for this, from an individual, has become a generic name for amphitheatres; (at least, I suppose so, for I heard it also at Old Capua,) just as a *Vesuvio* is the universal appellation of a volcano.

On one of the large blocks of stone that were lying about near here, dug up in Lucien Buonaparte's late excavation, I observed this inscription:

LOCAVIT P. GABINI.

I have since found that other vestiges had previ-

ously given rise to the belief, that the Villa of Gabinius was near here, and this inscription, perhaps placed by some descendant of the Tribune, seems to confirm it.

Prince Lucien is carrying on the excavations amongst the ruins of Tusculum, with great spirit. He has already brought to light an ancient street, or road, paved with large irregular stones, laid down in their natural forms, and closely fitted together, like the pavement of the Via Appia, or the streets of Pompeii, which has a strong and solid, but clumsy appearance. This Tusculan street, however, has not, like those of Pompeii, sidepaths, or *trottoirs*, for foot passengers, though, like them, it has a fountain at the corner.*

The reticulated walls of a row of houses, with remains of yellow stucco upon them, still more strongly reminded us of the disinterred mansions of Pompeii. I wonder if the travellers who tell us, that in its streets "they could not help being astonished that the inhabitants of the town did not appear," would have the same feelings here. I own I never experienced them in either place. I never "hesitated to enter a house in Pompeii, lest the master should come to meet me," or expected the oil-merchant, or the wine-seller, "to jump up be-

* In these simple fountains, the water generally flows through the open mouth of a marble ram's head, or sometimes a mask, into a deep trough or cistern.

hind the little marble counters of their shops."* Indeed, this impression is to me wholly incomprehensible. Broken walls, open door-ways, empty chambers, with the painted stucco half stripped off; floors, whose pavement is torn up; and houses wholly roofless, and open to the light of heaven,—can this give an idea of habitation? No—It presents an appearance of a ruined and forsaken city, whose inhabitants have gone down to the grave. It is, indeed, wonderful to think, that two thousand years ago, these chambers, and streets, and theatres, and temples, were thronged with busy Romans—wonderful to see the freshness of the paintings where they have been left on the walls, of the names of the people above their doors, of the idle unmeaning scrawls, scratched in their vacant hours, of the stone triclinium where they used to eat, and of the marble altars where they used to worship. But

* There are two oil shops, with large earthen jars for the oil, sunk in the narrow marble counter. In another shop, this little slab of marble is marked with rims, apparently stained from the wet bottoms of cups; and as coffee was unknown in those days, we must suppose it to have been a place for the sale of wine, or liqueurs, if they had any. Next door to one of the oil shops, is a baker's shop, with a furnace and oven for baking bread, and great stone-mills, exactly on the construction of our coffee hand-mills, for grinding the flour. I dare say, the ancient Romans had no better contrivance. Scripture, which was contemporaneous with this period, speaks of "two women grinding at a mill;"—in all probability just such a mill as this at Pompeii.

there is nothing to remind us of present life, or human occupation. All is ruinous and desolate. I ought, perhaps, to except the half-finished buildings of the Forum, with its Basilica, Temples, &c. which, having been shattered by one of the earthquakes that gave warning (unheeded, uncomprehended warning) of the coming destruction,—the unfortunate Pompeiians were in the act of repairing and rebuilding; when Vesuvius, after the repose of countless ages, burst forth into those flames that have never since been quenched, and into that tremendous eruption which overwhelmed their city beneath its ruins.* There, indeed, every object tends to impress the eye with the belief of present business and occupation. The large blocks of stone, half chipped over with the fresh marks of the chisel,—the flags lying ready to insert in the half-

* Pompeii was covered with the soft ashes from the volcano, which are easily removed. So, perhaps, was the neighbouring village, or rather perhaps villa, of Stabiæ. Herculaneum is, however, filled with a substance which Time has turned into stone. It was formerly thought to be congealed lava; but had this fiery torrent inundated the city, the bronze statues, and all the metallic and glass vessels, which were found entire, would have been fused; it is therefore conjectured, that the beds of ashes which filled it almost instantaneously, were mixed with the streams of boiling water, which are thrown out in every eruption, and were, we know, in this; and that this mud hardening, has produced the tufo which fills it. The impression of the head of one of the bronze statues, was found on the stone in which it was cased, like a mould; so that the stuff must have been in a liquid or soft form when it closed round it.

finished pavement,—the Doric columns round the Forum half-raised,—the temples at the extremities, half-built,—the walls of unequal height, half-carried up,—all had such an air of new buildings going on, that, mistaking the men who were digging out the rubbish for workmen employed in erecting them,—a gentleman of our party indignantly asked them, what they were building there?

Excepting this spot,—the last excavated, and by far the most interesting,—there is nothing to call up such a delusion; nothing that does not speak of the past, rather than the present.

I remember nothing surprised me more in Pompeii, than the diminutive size of every object. The narrow track of the wheels down the streets, which shewed the smallness of their carriages; the little streets themselves; the little houses; the ridiculously little rooms, no larger than a light closet; the little shops, and even the little temples, seemed calculated for a race of pigmies; and one could hardly understand how that portly personage—a *Roman togatus*,—could have moved about in them.

But I forget that I am at Tusculum, not at Pompeii. Its few remains that are above ground, I have already noticed. It seems to have been built upon the bed of some volcanic eruption of uncomputable antiquity, for lavas have been dug out below the ruins, and also quantities of cinders, like those of Vesuvius; with which, indeed, the whole hill is covered. In this respect, too, it resembles Pompeii, where, beneath the foundations of the

houses, lavas, &c., are brought up; and even at the distance of three hundred palms* below the surface (the greatest depth that has been bored) volcanic matter is still found.

From the summit of the hill of Frascati the view is most extensive and grand. The eye, resting for a moment on the towers and cupolas of Rome, and more than all, on the great Dome of St Peter's; wanders far over the wide plain of the Campagna, to the purple heights of Mount Ciminus and Soracte, on the north; to the Sabine Hills, backed by the lofty Appenines, on the east; and to the blue waters of the Mediterranean, which bound the prospect, on the west.

On our left, immediately above us, rose the wood-covered height of Monte Cava, towering in majesty to the skies. Far beneath us, on the right, the little lake of Gabia, where stood the ancient city of that name, attracted the eye by its gleaming waters; so totally destitute of banks, that it looked like a looking-glass, lying on the ground.

In descending, we stopped at the Ruffinella. Prince Lucien has bestowed much money, but little taste in its embellishment. Ancient ilex, the growth of ages, have been lopped into skeleton trees, and are interspersed with little parterres, newly made, embroidered with the names of Homer, Virgil, Racine, &c., planted in box, and framed in the same! The statue of Apollo has been

† Upwards of 170 feet.

stuck up amongst them, as if this ingenious device had been inspired by that god himself. There are no want of bad busts and modern statues, clipped hedges, and formal grass walks. Forlorn dirty offices meet the eye; the slovenly, neglected appearance of every thing, gives this princely villa an air of utter wretchedness; and we look in vain for flowers or shrubs,—for bloom or fragrance,—for nature or beauty.

The chapel in the interior is pretty, and contains three tolerable paintings, by Carlo Maratti,—a monument, erected by Prince Lucien, to his first wife, who died at the age of twenty-six; another to his son, who died in the prime of youth; and a third to his and Napoleon's father, who was born at Corsica, and died at Montpellier, at the age of thirty-six; and who, judging from his bust, must have had an uncommonly fine commanding countenance.

In the little town of Frascati, we saw the tomb of Lucullus, a name which tradition alone has given. Once it has been a magnificent building, but now it serves for a pig-stye. The exterior is nearly destroyed, and two dirty houses are built against it.

I forgot to mention, in their proper place, the *Centroni di Lucullo*, as the country people call some curious and very extensive substructions, in the form of an oblong square; which *Centroni* they maintain to have been the cellars of that great epicurean's villa. Their extent, indeed, enormous as it is, (and by pacing, the gentlemen of our party computed it to be about 450 feet in length,) would scarcely be disproportioned to that of a villa, which,

according to Pliny,* covered whole acres, and "made land scarce."

In the Cathedral,—a paltry structure, is a paltry monument to Cardinal York, the last of the Stuarts, who was Cardinal Bishop of this diocese; and another to Prince Charles Edward, the Pretender. The inscription, which is sufficiently simple, you may perhaps like to see. It is as follows:—

Hic situs est Carolus Odoardus cui Pater Jacobus III. Rex Angliæ, Scotiæ, Franciæ, Hiberniæ, Primus Natorum, paterni Juris et regiæ dignitatis successor et heres, qui domicilio sibi Romæ delecto Comes Albaniensis dictus est.

Vixit Annos 57 et mensem, decessit in pace.—Pridie Kal. Feb. Anno. 1787.

It was not over the dust of the last of this ill-fated race, that we could recal to mind their errors; pity for their misfortunes could not fail to find its way to our hearts; yet we could not but reflect, that had they sat on the throne of their fathers, and their royal tomb arisen in the land of their birth; we might now have had cause to mourn for our country, instead of her kings.

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* Pliny, l. iv. c. 6.

LETTER XCIII.

GROTTO FERRATA.—CICERO'S VILLA.—DOMENICHINO'S FRESCOS.—MARINO.

NOTHING can exceed the beauty of the drive from Frascati to Albano; for nine miles, we continue to pass through a varied succession of the most romantic and picturesque scenery. We first drove through the grounds of the Villa Giustiniani, and along a road shaded with umbrageous woods of oak and ilex, to the church and convent of Grotto Ferrata, one of the supposed sites of Cicero's Tusculan Villa. The situation is delightful; the ancient trees, and soft verdant meadows around it, almost reminded me of some of the loveliest scenes of England: and the little brook "that babbles by," was not the less interesting from the thought that its murmurs might, perchance, have once soothed the ear of Cicero. It is now called the Marana, but is generally thought to be the *Aqua Crabra*, which he celebrates. No ruins or vestiges of his

villa, however, have been found here. It is said, that a part of a broken bust, inscribed with his name, was dug up; but even, if true, this would prove nothing, for his bust may have adorned many a Tusculan Villa. Two small bas reliefs were preserved in the church, and are now placed in the adjacent Episcopal Palace, (formerly inhabited by Cardinal York, now in the possession of Cardinal Gonsalvo.) One represents a philosopher, (young,) sitting with a scroll in his hand; the other, (a strange subject,) martial figures, supporting legs of a semi-colossal size.

The Convent of Greek Basilian Monks was founded by a St Nilo, or Nilus, in the tenth century, and if there was any thing so heathenish as a vestige of Cicero's Villa at that time, no doubt, he would piously sweep it all away. But the loss of the ruins of Cicero's Villa did not give me half so much pain as the sight of the ruins of Domenichino's Frescos, which are mouldering on the mildewed walls of the musty old Chapel of the Saints, already so destroyed, that the next generation will probably never behold them. Yet there is one of the four, (the Demoniac Boy,) which is, beyond all comparison, the finest of his works,—not even, I think, excepting the Communion of St Jerome; nor do I know any painting in the world that surpasses it, but some of Raphael's. You will remember that the subject is the same that forms the lower and principal picture of the Transfiguration, but Domenichino has avoided all approach to it, as completely as if he had never seen the work of his great

predecessor. The poor possessed boy,—the touching agony expressed in his twisted muscles and distorted features,—his upturned eyes, his gasping mouth, his convulsed limbs, and his whole figure, struggling in the arms of his afflicted father, perhaps equal,—and, if I may be allowed to say so, surpass—the Demoniac of Raphael. In other respects, the composition is less learned and complicated. There are fewer figures,—consequently not the same room for the masterly variety, and contrast of forms, expression, and attitude, that excite never-ending admiration, in the crowd without confusion, that fills the canvas of Raphael. But the few figures that Domenichino has introduced, perhaps possess, from that very circumstance, a deeper interest, and an expression that takes more forcible hold on the mind. The saint, whose finger is pressed on the lip of the poor sufferer, while his other hand reaches the sacred oil that is to work the cure, is strikingly fine; and the earnest attention of the two little boys looking on, is nature itself. But the mother kneeling, watching in breathless suspense the fate of her child, as if life hung upon its gasp,—the whole expression, countenance, attitude, and drapery of this incomparable figure, are a masterpiece of perfection, and may well stand a comparison with the female in the Transfiguration.

The next in merit of these frescos, is a miracle which took place at the building of the very Chapel in which we are standing. We behold the fall of a column upon the affrighted people, in consequence of the ropes breaking, by which the workmen were

raising it; but it luckily happens that the saint is looking at the plan of the building at the moment, and therefore their heads are not broken—being, it would seem, so *miraculously* thick as to resist it. This is an admirable production, but it is even more injured than the other.

The third, full of spirit and life, is the Meeting of the Emperor Otho and St Nilo, with all the pomp of attendants and horses. The fourth, and least to be admired, is St Nilo, standing alone below, with the Virgin, Redeemer, and all the heavenly host, in the skies.

At Marino; a pretty little town, most picturesquely situated on the summit of a rocky hill, overhanging a romantic woody dell; we stopped to see the churches, which, being Friday evening, were crowded with people. I could tell you of a fine painting of Guercino's, St Bartholomew on the Cross, with two ruffian executioners by his side; and the martyrdom of another saint; both in the Cathedral; but that I must already have exhausted your patience on this head. Pursuing our way, we walked down the steep hill into the romantic dell below, the carriages following; at the bottom, the bridge crossing the brawling stream; the rocks overhanging it, shaded by drooping plants; the ruined ivy-covered Gothic tower, that rose far above the deep thick woods of oak and ilex; and the bright verdure of the gay meadows; formed one of the most delightful scenes I ever beheld, and the most admirably calculated for painting. In the foreground, was the road winding abruptly round, and at one corner, a

fountain and large reservoir, at which the country women, in the most picturesque dresses imaginable, were washing and beating their clothes, talking and laughing with a hilarity that was quite new to us, after being so many months shut up with the sombre Romans. We proceeded along this beautiful woody dell, with Monte Cava towering above us, till we came at once into full view of the Lake of Albano, and beheld the deep clear basin of its waters, the bright verdure of its sloping banks, the rich foliage of the chesnut trees, contrasting with the dark cypress and ilex, and the glowing tints of the evening sky, which assumed every varying hue as we continued to wind along above the lake. Passing Castel Gandolfo, the summer residence of the Pope, we entered Albano by an avenue of noble ilex trees, two miles in length.

LETTER XCIV.

ANTIQUITIES OF ALBANO.—THE EMISSARIUM OF THE ALBAN LAKE.—THE NYMPHÆUM OF DOMITIAN.—RUINS OF DOMITIAN'S VILLA.—TOMB OF ASCANIUS.—TOMB OF POMPEY.—ALBA LONGA.—ANTEDILUVIAN VASES.

THERE is no antiquity in the world more remarkable than the great Emissarium, or outlet of the Alban Lake. It was made nearly four hundred years before the Christian era, when Rome was an infant state. It is a tunnel a mile and a half in length, bored through the mountain of Albano, for the most part through the solid rock, and built of solid mason-work. It was done to carry off the waters of the lake, which, without any apparent cause, had suddenly overflowed their banks, and even risen to such a height as to threaten Rome itself, and the whole plain of Latium, with inundation. This happened during the long protracted siege of Veii. Messengers were sent to consult the Delphic oracle, who brought back for answer, that Rome would never be safe, nor Veii taken, till the waters of the Alban lake were made to flow to the sea. A Veian prophet and

prisoner had previously announced the same fiat. Inspired at once by fear and hope, this wonderful work,—which seemed to require a degree of skill and science far beyond that early age, was, in the same year, begun and ended; and so executed, that it would shame this degenerate age. After a lapse of twenty-two centuries, we find it still answering its original purpose, as if only built yesterday, and behold the waters of the Alban Lake still flowing through it, as they did in the days of Camillus. The channel is six feet in height, by three and a half in breadth. Three men only could have laboured in it at once; and it is calculated that by three men, (beginning at each end,) the most unremitting perseverance would not have brought it to a conclusion during at least three years. How it was finished in one, is the question. Piranesi fancifully supposes that they bored pits in several places through the mountain, down to the proper level, and let men down to continue the works. We cannot, however, now understand the rapidity with which it was executed; we can only admire the perfection and durability of this grand piece of architecture, which is, perhaps, without exception, the most ancient and the most noble work of Roman times. The arch, which is still standing here, must convince the most sceptical, that the structure of the arch was known, to the Romans at least, four hundred years before the Christian era, and three hundred before the epoch at which certain connoisseurs have fixed its introduction But if they shall still maintain, that the

polished Greeks, even while they raised those magnificent buildings, that have been the sole models of succeeding ages and nations, were ignorant of this one of the first principles of architecture;—if they shall still maintain, that, though practised during so many centuries by their rude neighbours, the Etruscans and Romans, (with whom, too, they held constant intercourse,) it was unknown to them, I shall certainly leave them in undisputed possession of their paradox.

In front of the channel of the Emissarium, is an open chamber, or vestibule,—if I may call it so,—which is, in some degree, ruined; and the machines, works, &c. that were attached to it for regulating the flow of water, as well as those for the taking of fish, have, of course, long since vanished. On one side of the arch of the Emissarium, from amongst the immense blocks of stone which form the massive walls, an ilex tree, the largest I ever beheld, that almost seems coeval with the building itself, has wreathed its old fantastic roots; and stretching forth into four immense trunks, spreads its broad horizontal branches and luxuriant depth of shade, over the whole court.

Not far from hence, along the shore of the lake, are some lofty artificial caves, or grottos, hollowed out in its rocky precipitous banks, called, by the country people, the Bagni di Diana, or Grotto delle Ninfe, and supposed to be the remains of a Nymphæum built by Domitian.

A soft green sward, spotted with magnificent trees, gently slopes to the margin of the water;

luxuriant ivy, hanging in wreaths nearly to the ground, shades its mouth, and a multitude of wild plants mingle their green pensile foliage from the rocks above. The natural grandeur of this immense cavern, the vaulted roof, the lofty arches, and "long withdrawing" recesses, partially seen within the deep shade of its interior; the sunny brightness of the rocks and trees, and romantic banks without; the woody height of Monte Cava towering into the bright blue heavens, and reflected in the crystal mirror of the lake; the verdure and stillness, and seclusion that breathe around, form one of the most enchanting scenes I ever beheld.

The ancient Nymphæa were generally hollowed out, like this, in the sides of steep hills, and no place could be more happily chosen for this purpose than the cool margin of the Alban Lake. I have already noticed those delicious retreats of coolness and of shade, where the luxurious Romans, in the oppressive heats of summer, used to recline on marble seats, to breathe in stillness and repose, amidst their fresh flowing fountains, and to gaze on their limpid basins, which reflected the statues of the Nymphs that were fabled to haunt them.

Virgil beautifully describes them:

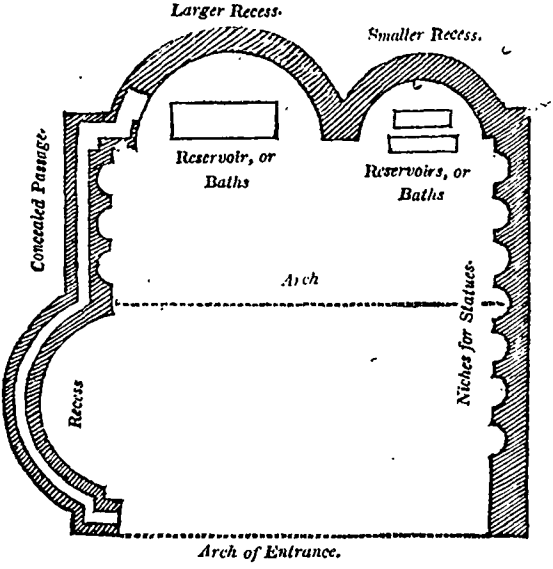
"Fronte sub adversa scopulis pendentibus antrum:
Intus aquæ dulces, vivoque sedilia saxo;
Nympharum domus."*

* Æn. lib. i. v. 167.

As the grottos on this lake, however, form the only undoubted remains of an ancient Nymphæum now left in the world, I shall give you a particular account of them.* The entrance of the principal grotto is a wide and lofty arch of fine Roman brickwork, through which the sun-beams, playing amidst waving wreaths of ivy, break beautifully on the caverned roof. On the left, on entering, is a large semi-circular recess, or alcove; on the right, four niches for statues. Another arch, of the same span as the entrance, here crosses the grotto, and beyond it, on either side, are three niches for statues.

Opposite, at the far extremity of the grotto, two arches of unequal size divide the breadth into two alcoves, or recesses: The largest contains one reservoir, which has much the appearance of a bath; the other has two smaller reservoirs, or baths, close to each other. Between the wall and the rock, on the left side, in which are the alcove, and the three niches already mentioned, a narrow concealed passage runs along, and issues out in the large alcove at the farther extremity of the grotto. But a sketch of the plan, however clumsily drawn, will perhaps give you a clearer idea of it than my description.

* An ancient mosaic picture of a Nymphæum was found on the Quirinal Hill, and used to be in the Barberini Collection. There is an engraving of it in the Ant. Rom. Tom. iv. p. 999.



The channels for the water to flow down the rock into the reservoirs, are still distinctly visible, and the reservoirs are yet more than half filled with water. The irregularity of their size, and that of the whole plan, is singular, and the use of the concealed passage rather unaccountable. Perhaps the great recess at the side contained the statue of Diana; and the ten niches, the statues of her Nymphs. I should suppose this grotto to have been a natural one, but considerably enlarged by art. There is a smaller cave formed in the rock on either side of this, but no remains of building about them. The mouth of one of them is so choked up with trees

and wild bushes, that it is difficult to discover it, and still more difficult to penetrate into it, which we did without making any very notable discoveries in reward for the scratches we received.

These are by no means the only remains of the erections of Domitian at Albano. Among the extensive grounds of the Villa Barberini, near the town, on the hill above, are scattered many vestiges of his magnificent villa, which is said to have comprized the Villas of Clodius and of Pompey. The most curious of these are some long ranges of a *Crypto Portico*, by some thought a part of Clodius's "insane structures," as Cicero calls them.* Immense conduits for water, shattered walls, and other fragments of ancient buildings, are met with here and there, overgrown with a profusion of ivy, half-lost in thickets of laurel, myrtle, and holly,—while ilex trees, the growth of centuries, throw over them their impenetrable depth of shade.

The view from the terrace of this villa, which is supported on these ancient arches and substructions of Domitian's, (perhaps too, Clodius's) villa,

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* "Insanis molibus oppresserat."—*Cic. Pro T. Ann. Mil.* It was impossible, amidst these hills and "sacred groves," not to remember Cicero's beautiful invocation to them, towards the close of the above unparalleled oration, or to raise our eyes to the majestic summit of that lofty mount, without being tempted to exclaim with him,—"Tuque ex tuo edito monte, Latiari sancte Jupiter, cujus ille lacus, nemora, finesque," &c.

is in the highest degree striking and beautiful; but I resist the temptation of describing it, although the hills, the plains, the shores, were replete with a thousand classic remembrances; and far over the blue waters of the Mediterranean, which bathes the long line of coast, my eye was caught by the Island of Ponza, the ancient abode of illustrious Roman exiles.

At the Convent of St Paul, are some walls built of large square blocks of stone, supposed to have formed part of Domitian's Prætorian Camp; and in the gardens of the convent, are some ruins of an Amphitheatre.

At either end of the town of Albano, an ancient tomb excites the attention of the traveller. That which stands a little on the left of the road, on entering Albano from Rome, is a high pyramidal structure, once covered with marble, and adorned with three orders of marble columns, but now entirely despoiled: It is called the Tomb of Ascanius. The other, at the southern extremity of the town, and on the road to Naples, is a square edifice of immense solidity, built of large blocks of stone, and crowned with five small pyramids, of which two only are now entire: This is called the Tomb of the Horatii and Curiatii, the five pyramids being thought to commemorate the five slaughtered combatants; and accordingly an inscription placed upon it by a modern Roman family, asserts the fact. But Livy tells us, the scene of that memorable combat was at Cluillius's Ditch, the spot where Hannibal after-

wards encamped, a very few miles from Rome, and that they were interred on the field of battle.

By others, this sepulchre is denominated the Tomb of Pompey, whose ashes, according to Plutarch, were brought from Egypt by Cornelia, to his Alban Villa; but this is impossible, for that villa was bought after his death by Mark Anthony, and became the scene of his licentious dissipation. This may have been the family mausoleum of Pompey, which Plutarch tells us was at Alba; but it is not probable that his remains were deposited in it, for according to Pliny, Strabo, and many ancient authors, he was buried at Mount Casius, in Egypt.* According to a third supposition, it is a cenotaph erected to his memory; and, in either case, the five pyramids are supposed to commemorate the five victories he gained before his first consulship. But the fact is, both these ancient sepulchres are unknown, and busy conjecture has supplied the place of history.

Dionysius Halicarnassus tells us, the ancient city of Alba Longa was between the Alban Mount and the sea. Any of the antiquarians will shew you the exact site, and you may choose out of the variety you will see, if you apply to them all. There is not, of course, a single vestige of it.

A great deal of noise was made about some cinerary urns of terra cotta, which were dug up near Castel Gondolfo, and which we were gravely assu-

* Pliny, lib. v. c. 12.

red last winter, were antediluvian, and had been deposited in that spot before the Deluge ! ! ! Several treatises of great length and learning were written to prove this, and it was established in the most satisfactory manner, till suddenly,—to the confusion of the antediluvians,—they proved to be Gothic ! Some foreigners (in their right senses,) brought indisputable evidence of urns, so precisely similar, having been found in Prussia, and various parts of Germany, in Sweden, Denmark, and England, that even the antediluvians were compelled to admit the truth. What can we think of the sanity of a set of archeological Academicians, that gravely pronounced some clay urns to be antediluvian !

I ought to have told you, that this notion was put into their heads, in consequence of finding them, as was pretended, under a stratum of tufo stone. If this was true, the stone had probably been taken up to admit the urns, and then laid down again, or it might have been subsequently formed. It was, however, acknowledged not to have been an unbroken layer, but, on the contrary, much splintered.

LETTER XCV.

ASCENT OF THE ALBAN MOUNT.—CAMP OF HANNIBAL.—TRIUMPHAL WAY.—CONVENT OF FRIARS.—VOLCANOS.—LAKE OF NUMI.—ARICIA.—CIVITA LAVINIA.—CORA.—TEMPLE OF HERCULES.—CYCLOPEAN WALLS.

If I could, by description, convey to you any part of the pleasure I myself enjoyed in our expedition to the top of Monte Cava, I would give it you at large; but as mere words can never paint the varied beauty of such scenery, I shall be as sparing of them as possible.

After breakfast, on a beautiful May morning, at the door of the inn, we mounted our asses, which carried us all with great ease and safety, although the long legs of some of the gentlemen nearly touched the ground. We passed the Capuchin Convent, the terrace of which,—forbidden to females,—commands a most beautiful prospect, and then turning along the banks of the lake, wound through magnificent woods and thick copses of oak, chesnut, and hazel, looking down into the deep

crystal basin below, and above to the towering summit of the classic mountain, whose sylvan sides we were ascending. I observed some broken conduits for water here and there in the ground on our right. Amidst the trees appeared a rustic chapel to the Madonna. She is called La Madonna del Tufo, because she was found under the tufo or soft volcanic stone. Like the vases, I wonder they did not make her out to be an antediluvian Madonna. But she is a very miraculous Madonna, and I am assured the day never passes without her working some miracle, more especially in the curing of cows, for which she is highly famed. We soon passed Palazzuola, a villa of the Colonna family, with another Convent of Franciscans attached to it. Near it, by the road side, are some immense caverns, supported by pillars of rock, said to be natural, but evidently much enlarged by art. The wide arches of the rocky roof, the long perspective of the interior, indistinctly seen in distance, dividing into remote passages and crossing arches, had a singularly fine effect beneath the hanging rocks and ancient trees that bend over them. The country people call them the Grottos of Ascanius, and a tomb, a little farther along, they call the Tomb of Ascanius; but as Ascanius was not a Roman Consul, and as this tomb has twelve consular fasces, with the axes, it must have been the tomb of a Consul, and consequently not his. It has also a Roman eagle and a globe resting on a sceptre, sculptured upon it, so that it would seem to have been the tomb of an emperor. Some, however,

think that it was a habitation for the living, not for the dead; a part of the Consular House, where the Roman Consuls slept during the celebration of the Feriæ Latinæ. This solemnity, in latter times, lasted four days, and if any informality or omission had taken place in the ceremony, the whole was recommenced from the beginning. The principal magistrates of all the cities of Latium assembled for this purpose, and, led by the Roman Consul, ascended in solemn procession to the Temple of Jupiter Latialis, where they offered the sacrifice of an ox, of which every one carried away a portion. States, at war with each other, desisted from hostilities during this holy "truce of God," and every treaty or engagement was here solemnly ratified in the sacred presence of their Supreme Deity.

Still ascending through the woods, we at length emerged from them at the village of Rocca di Papa, which hangs over the lake on a steep shelving ledge of bare rock, that terminates in a fine point, crowned with tufted ilexes. We scrambled through this almost perpendicular village on our feet, the poor asses being here scarcely able to pull themselves up, and were much pleased with the appearance of the people, who seem a much hardier, more industrious, and contented race, than those of the plain. The women, decently and most picturesquely dressed, were sitting twirling the spindle at their cottage-doors; and, strange to tell, they did not beg! The children, too, had shoes and stockings, a change I had also observed at Frascati and Albano.

The soft green sloping lawns above the village, which we next passed through, are called *I Prati di Annibale;* and the tradition is still told, that the Carthaginian pitched his camp here, and looked down upon the city he meant to subdue. There is nothing improbable in the tale, for, from the account Livy gives of Hannibal's route, both on his way from Campania, when he vainly summoned Tusculum to surrender; and back again, after his unsuccessful bravado at the gates of Rome; it is plain he passed over these hills.* Previous to this, on his way to Capua, immediately after the fatal battle of Cannæ, it would seem he made a halt upon the mountains near Rome.†

We now began to ascend the last and steepest part of the mountain, through thick woods of chesnut, and soon joined the ancient Via Triumphalis, which is paved in the usual way, with large irregular-shaped stones, closely fitted together, and forming a flat surface. The road is in high preservation, about the same breadth as the streets of Pompeii, and, like them, marked with the wheels of the cars, or carriages. In this case, however, it could not be the track of the triumphal cars, for the lesser triumph only, the Ovation, was celebrated here, when the victor walked on foot. Pope Alexander Seventh, indeed, was drawn up it *in triumph* in a carriage!

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* Livy, lib. xxvi. c. 10.

† In propinquis urbis montibus moratus est.
Corn. Nepotis, in Hannibal.

The summit of the mountain is covered with soft green turf, perhaps one-fourth of a mile in circumference, the centre of which is occupied, not by the proud Temple of Jupiter Latialis, but by a Convent of *Passionisti* Friars, built on its substructions; and some large blocks of stone, which form the only remains of it, are set up to form a slovenly fence for their weed-covered garden, which they are too lazy even to cultivate. These good fathers were, luckily for us, at dinner when we arrived, and well knowing we should obtain no admittance with their consent, we stole in at the open door, and proceeded straight up to the very top of the Convent, from whence we enjoyed one of the most beautiful, extended, and classic prospects in the world. All Latium lay like a map beneath our feet; the regions far to the south, which, in returning from Naples, we had seemed to leave behind for ever, were once more revealed to our view. From the rocky cliffs of Anxur washed by the waves, where Fancy, even at this distance, almost seemed to give to our sight the ruined temples we had visited on its height; along the low marshy waste of the Pontine Marshes, bounded on one side by the range of the Volscian Hills, on the other by the blue line of the Mediterranean, whose waters encircled the lofty promontory of Circe, and bathed the depopulated walls of Antium, Lavinium, and Laurentium;—we gazed upon towns and villages, and mountains, famed in early history, and in classic song;—upon the very field of all the battles in the Æneid, where Turnus and Æneas had fought, and

"The swift Camilla scoured along the plain;"

—upon the ancient Tiber, winding its silent course through the deserted Campagna, and encircling, in a last embrace, the Insula Sacra, before its waters mingled with the ocean;—upon Rome, with the stupendous ruins of the Coliseum, and the proud dome of St Peter's;—upon the northern heights of Mount Ciminus and Soracte, that seemed to shut us out from the land of our birth;—and upon the range of the Sabine Hills, and the lofty summits of the Appenines, that in proud and embattled grandeur rose up into the heavens, as if to fence in the classic plains of Italy. The very spot on which we stood, at the summit of the mountain, was the same from whence Juno surveyed the two contending armies, previous to the last combat of the Æneid, and addressed her angry complaints to the Goddess of the Lake below, the transformed sister of Turnus.

> At Juno, e summo, qui nunc Albanus habetur,
> Tum neque nomen erat, nec honos, aut gloria, monti,
> Prospiciens tumulo, campum adspectabat, et ambas,
> Laurentum Troumque, acies, urbemque Latini.
> Extemplo Turni sic est affata sororem,
> Diva deam, stagnis quæ, fluminibusque sonoris,
> Præsidet, &c. &c. ÆN. lib. xii. v. 134.

We were disturbed from the enjoyment of tracing, in this delightful prospect, a thousand spots which our early studies had made almost as interesting to us as the very recollections of our childhood, by the approach of the fat old Friars, who came puffing and blowing up the stairs, in grievous horror and perturbation, caused by hearing of our

daring profanation of their holy premises, and who, at the sight of a party of young ladies, in actual possession of the very heights of the Convent, commenced an outcry such as it was hardly possible to hear with gravity. Doubtless, their rage and despair were exceedingly increased by the thought of the smoking viands they had left in the refectory below. They are a Convent of Penitents; and, to judge from their appearance, eating and drinking must be to them a great penance; and one they practice most rigorously, for they are twelve as fat Friars as ever wore a cowl,—more especially the one whose superior authority was denoted by his superior corpulency, and who continued to vociferate in alternate tones of anger, lamentation, menace, and supplication, his desire for us to depart. At last we did so, and our parting donation, I believe, almost reconciled them to our trespass.

It is impossible to look down from this height, into the basin of the Alban Lake, deep sunk within its high and shelving banks, without feeling impressed with the popular belief, that it has once been the crater of a volcano. Its form is circular, its circumference is not more than five miles; and the hills, the rocks, the plains, the very crust of the earth all around, are so evidently composed of volcanic matter, that the conviction is irresistibly impressed on our minds. The *Prati di Annibale*, —the green meadows where Hannibal was encamped,—are generally thought to have been the last mouth of the flaming volcano; and all around the village of Rocca di Papa, we observed great masses of lava, and other volcanic stones, precisely simi-

lar to many of the specimens we brought from Mount Vesuvius. It is curious, that if this spot was once the reservoir of fire, it is now that of snow. Rome is supplied with ice from hence, and it is kept here in pits of fifty feet in depth, with a drain at the bottom. The beautiful little Lake of Nemi, a few miles further to the south, on the road to Naples, is still smaller in circumference—still more deeply sunk in woody banks than that of Albano. So deep, indeed, is the gulf, and so small the aperture, that it is said even the stormy winds have no power to ruffle its calm basin, and the poets, therefore, called it the *Speculum Dianæ*.* By all the vulgar, and most of the scientific, this lake, too, is believed to have once been a crater.

Between Gensano, a town upon the Lake of Nemi, and Albano, is La Riccia, or Aricia, where Horace slept the first night of his journey to Brundusium. The Via Appia, which crosses the valley below the town, is supported by an immense mole, with arches; a truly Roman work, and well worth seeing, although it is generally passed unnoticed. It is necessary to descend into the valley, in order to have a good view of it; for from above, it is so overgrown with wild plants that nothing is discernible, and you may travel along it without discovering it.

From La Riccia we made an excursion to Civita Lavinia, and passed on the right the ruins of the famous Temple of Juno Lanuvina; so at least it

* Near this beautiful looking-glass, the Goddess had a celebrated temple.

was conjectured, because the statue of the Goddess was found here, whose rites were celebrated with almost as much secrecy as those of the Bona Dea, or the Eleusinian mysteries. We were, however, assured, that these ruins were a part of the *Palace of Evander*! At Civita Lavinia we saw a ring, to which we were gravely informed that Æneas had moored his ship! We also saw some ancient Cyclopean walls; but the Cyclopean walls at Cora are far more perfect and entire. In our journey to Naples, we made an excursion from Velletri, over the Volscian Hills, to that ancient city. Cisterna would have been a much nearer point, but there we could not procure asses; and our pilgrimage of four-and-twenty mortal miles on the backs of these slow animals, which occupied us from the dawn of day to the fall of night, through untracked woods and wilds, was not unattended with fatigue, and even peril; these hills being the notorious haunt of banditti, and Cora itself one of the chief places of their abode. Luckily, however, we accomplished it in safety, and persuaded ourselves that the sight of its antiquities was a sufficient recompence. The most striking of these are the remains of the Temple of Hercules: The ancient Doric portico, with its whole entablature, is entire. It has four Doric columns in front, which sustain the simple and beautiful frieze and pediment. Its architecture was much admired by Raphael, who studied it with great attention at the time he was employed in the building of St Peter's at Rome.

This beautiful portico stands in a singularly fine situation, upon a ledge, or platform, supported by

an ancient wall, beyond which the ground falls perpendicularly; and the laurels and cypress, the rocks and wild-springing aloes in front of it, form a fine foreground. Even the old tower of the church, rising behind it, adds to the picturesque effect.

In this church, we saw a beautiful Pagan altar found here, sculptured with rams heads, and wreaths of flowers; and a noble ancient vase, which serves for a baptismal font. In the walls of this church there is a blocked up door-way, above which I observed the following inscription:

M. MANLIUS M. F. | | | * LIVR.
FILIUS D. DUOMVIRES
PASINASUS | | | | ENTE | AEDEM
FACENDAM CORA VERUNTE
IODAMQUE PROLAXERA.

It is curious that the name of this man should be M. Manlius, for none of the family of Manlius were ever allowed to bear the name of Marcus, after the death of Capitolinus; and I do not remember that there was any other family of that name of any note. In another part of the town, and at another church, are the remains of the Temple of Castor and Pollux, which chiefly consist of two noble Corinthian columns, and a fragment of the frieze, on which is inscribed,—

M. CASTORE POLLUCIDE, C. S. FAC
M. CALVIUS. M. | P. N.

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* These marks I have made to signify obliterated letters.

In the court of a house are two small Doric pillars, said to have belonged to the Temple of Diana. But the most curious of the antiquities at Cora are the Cyclopean Walls, of which there are very extensive remains: They are of immense solidity, at least thirty feet in height, and built of enormous irregular shaped stones, set up like flags, with their smooth flat expanse outwards, and fitted to each other with the greatest nicety, but without any cement. They really look as if they had been hammered together by the labour of the Cyclops. It has been justly remarked, that they most resemble the ancient pavement of the Via Appia, or the streets of Pompeii, set up vertically.*

One of the most striking peculiarities in these Cyclopean walls—and one that, as far as I know, has never yet been noticed, is that they are built in continual curves, or angles, something like the creases of a great Indian screen, when not much drawn out—in this manner—

There is a very curious ancient bridge, too, called the Ponte di Catena, built in the same Cyclopean mode of construction, but, of course, not in these angles. Vitruvius, in speaking of these very walls of Cora, calls this extraordinary style of building, "antiquum," and "incertum," but throws no light upon its origin. "Dubious" it must still continue to be. There is no account more satisfactory in

* Vide Winkelman sur l'Architecture.

Winkelman, or any other author, of it; and, excepting that it is of the highest antiquity, nothing respecting it seems to be known. One writer, (Father Volpi,) attributes it to the Goths!

On Trajan's column, an ancient city is represented, with walls of this construction, and remains of it are found in several parts of Greece, and in many of the ancient towns near Rome, which, like Cora, boast a Greek origin. At the ruins of a city among the Volscian Hills, about five miles from hence, called Civita Penatorio, and which I believe was anciently Alatri; at Fondi, in the kingdom of Naples, where we also saw them; at Civita Lavinia, and at Palestrina, vestiges of them still stand.

Circumstances, over which I have no controul, have prevented me from visiting Palestrina, so that I can give you no account of the Cyclopean Walls there, nor yet favour you with my opinion, in addition to the numbers already given, on the subject of the famous mosaic of the Temple of Fortune, which is preserved in a palace there, to perplex the heads of antiquaries and cognoscenti. These are misfortunes which probably you will not lament very deeply, neither do I; but Palestrina was the ancient Præneste, therefore, I should have liked to have seen it; though of Præneste there are now no remains. Even of the celebrated temple of "that most fortunate of fortunes," as Carneades the Athenian, from its surpassing magnificence, called the Fortune of Præneste,—there is not now one stone left upon another, though the platform on which it stood can still be distinctly traced.

LETTER XCVI.

FRASCATI—BANDITTI.

Frascati, Nov. 11, 1818.

CONSTERNATION fills this little peaceful town. Yesterday evening, Lucien Buonaparte's villa was entered by a gang of banditti;—but I must tell you the story in order as it happened.

About four in the afternoon, *Monsignore*, the old priest of the family, set out to take his accustomed walk; and, unluckily for himself, directed his steps up the hill to the ruins of ancient Tusculum; when, suddenly from the bushes which shade the cavity of the amphitheatre, two armed robbers sprung out, dragged him among the thickets, where four others were lying in ambush; and having stripped him of his watch, money, and clothes; tied his hands behind his back, and gave him notice, that the first moment he attempted to speak, or make the smallest noise, would be the last of his life. They kept him prisoner there till after sunset,

when they crept through the wood to the house, and made a halt among the thick laurels and shrubs close to it. In the meantime the dinner-bell rang, the family sat down to table, but as Monsignore was not to be found, a servant was sent into the pleasure-ground in search of him, who left the house-door unfastened. The banditti softly made their approaches. Five of them entered unseen and unheard, and the sixth staid to guard the door. Monsignore seized this moment to betake himself to his heels, and gained a remote out-house, where he buried himself overhead among straw, and was found many hours after more dead than alive.

In the meantime the five robbers, with their fire-arms presented, cautiously advanced into the house, but they were soon descried by the servants, whose shrieks they stilled in a moment by the menace of instant death, if they moved a step, or uttered a sound. One maid-servant, however, escaped, and gave the alarm to the party in the dining-room, who all fled in different directions, to conceal themselves, while the unfortunate secretary, who had previously left the room to inquire into the cause of the tumult, was seized, on his way down stairs, by the robbers, who mistook him for the Prince; and, in spite of his protestations, was carried off, together with the head-butler, and a poor Facchino,* whom they encountered on the grounds, to

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† Porter, or out-door labourer.

the mountain above Velletri, a distance of seven miles, without stopping.

This morning the captured Facchino, like another Regulus, has been sent as ambassador, or *charge d'affaires*, from the banditti to the Prince, to propose terms, which are, to deliver up their prisoners on the payment of a ransom of 4000 crowns; or, on the non-payment of it, within four-and-twenty hours, to shoot them. Lucien Buonaparte sent back one half of their demand in money, and an order on his banker for the rest. The robbers sent back the order, torn through the middle, with a further demand of 4000 crowns in hard money, besides the 2000 they had already received, under pain of the immediate death of their prisoners. The Prince received this insolent mandate in his palace at Rome, where he took refuge this morning, and has been obliged to obey it.

I wonder the government do not feel ashamed that such outrages should be perpetrated within ten miles of Rome, and that they should be obliged to admit delegates from banditti into the very seat of government—the capital itself. A detachment of troops, and about two hundred armed peasants, levied by Lucien Buonaparte, are ready for the pursuit of the villains, the moment their captives are released—but, till then, they dare not move, for the *eyri* on which they have perched themselves, commands a view of the whole country in every direction, and they have sworn to put the prisoners to death the moment they see the approach of an armed man.

The Pope's soldiers, indeed, it would seem, are not much to be depended upon themselves, for it is not long since the guard from the Trinità de' Monti, and the Porta del Popolo, at Rome, walked off one fine moonlight night, with their arms and accoutrements, to the hills, and joined a party of banditti.

It was the intention of the banditti, who entered Lucien Buonaparte's villa, to have seized both him and his daughter, who had been betrothed that very day to Prince Ercolani, a young Bolognese nobleman; and had they succeeded, their demands would have had no bounds.

Frascati, Nov. 19.

After a captivity of two days and a half, the prisoners returned, and the troops and armed peasantry instantly began the pursuit. The mountain on which they were stationed, it is said, was previously completely surrounded with guards, and every part of it has been searched,—an immense reward has been offered for the apprehension even of one of them—but all in vain. No traces of them have been discovered; and Lucien Buonaparte, in addition to the ransom, has had to pay an immense sum to the peasantry he hired, without the satisfaction of bringing the offenders to justice.

The unfortunate secretary has been confined to bed ever since, partly from the effects of fright, fa-

tigue, and cold, and partly from a wound he received in his forehead in the scuffle, when he was first taken prisoner. The captured butler, and Facchino, whom I have seen, say that the robbers did not treat them ill, and gave them plenty of food; more, indeed, than they could eat; for, it may be supposed, that in such a situation, their appetite could not be very keen. Neither could they enjoy much repose, surrounded with cocked carabines. The captain of those banditti, who was a remarkably little man, used to say to them, with great politeness, "We shall really be sorry to murder you, gentlemen, but if the Prince does not send the money, we must do it—our *honour* is engaged."

They knew, indeed, too well, he would keep his word; for it is not long since a poor young woman was carried off between Velletri and Terracina, and the ransom they required not being paid, she was murdered, and her body left on the mountains.

Nor is this the only exploit of the sort in this neighbourhood. A few weeks ago, a Roman gentleman and his daughters were taking a walk after mass on a Sunday, close to the town of Palestrina, when a party of banditti rushed upon them, and carried them off to the mountains. The poor old man, who was asthmatic, and unable to keep pace with the rapidity of the flight, was brutally murdered, before the eyes of his unfortunate daughters, whose ransom enriched these monsters with the wealth of the man they had slain.

About two months ago, a bride, on the day of her nuptials, was carried off from a villa near Albano, while sitting at table, surrounded by her husband and relations, and after passing a night on the mountain, she was liberated, on the payment of a heavy ransom, without insult or injury.

LETTER XCVII.

BANDITTI.

Rome, February 4th, 1818.

You were misinformed about our robbery; our ears were not cut off, neither were we left without any clothes, and I must beg to assure you, whatever you may have heard to the contrary, that we were not murdered. Our assailants, who were four in number, or perhaps more, (but four only appeared,) were, indeed, by no means sparing in their threats to put an end to us, and held their cocked pistols over and over again at our heads; but this was done in order to frighten us into giving them all we had; for though I am convinced they would have had no more scruple in killing us, than a butcher a sheep, or a sportsman a partridge, if they could have got a single ducat by it; yet, as that was not the case, and as the mere abstract act of murdering a set of harmless people cannot afford any extraordinary gratification; they granted my reiterated prayer, (which the gentlemen disdained to second,) to take our money and spare our lives; and we have good reason to bless ourselves in es-

caping out of the hands of these banditti with no injury except to our purses. Some gentlemen of our acquaintance have not been so fortunate, having been very roughly handled; but that I attribute entirely to their having had pistols, and not having had a lady to plead for them, and cajole the ruffians with her silver tongue.

We hear fresh accounts every day of captives carried off to the mountains by the banditti, and the most daring outrages practised with impunity. A party of them came down the other evening into the town of Terracina, took the post-master out of his own house, and barbarously murdered him. They had, it seems, vowed vengeance against him, on account of the steps he had taken to bring them to justice.

A few days ago, *Barbone*, the noted chief who holds his reign in the woody fastnesses of Mount Algido,* in defiance of the powers of papal justice; and who, during four years, has been the terror of the whole country; after performing various recent achievements at the head of his band, went in open day alone into the town of Velletri, ordered, and ate an excellent dinner at the inn, drank the best wines, walked about with the utmost nonchalance, and talked about the very robberies he had been committing. He was, however, recognized at last; but, strange to say, he made his escape, though slightly wounded in the leg by a shot.

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* Anciently Mount Algidum, a high and beautiful hill in the same chain as the Alban Mount, about fourteen miles from Rome.

The numerous bands of robbers which infest this country by no means live either upon their depredations on travellers, or the ransom of their prisoners: Their grand resource is the plunder of the farmers, particularly those who live among the hills, many of whom are extremely rich, not only in flocks and cattle, and such sort of rural property, but in money. The whole range of the Volscian Hills, which extend from Mount Albano far into the kingdom of Naples, and branch off into various chains, stretching up to the Appenines, and through the heart of Calabria, are all infested with banditti. The French would allow no robber but themselves, and kept the country tolerably clear of them; but since they went away, they have increased and multiplied.*

The consequence of all the horrible outrages that have been practised during these nine months, has been, that the Secretary of State has at last issued a proclamation, inviting all the banditti to surrender themselves, and engaging to pay them a certain sum per day, to maintain them at the public

* The English completely rid Sicily of robbers, simply by making every proprietor, township, &c., responsible for the robberies committed within his estate, or jurisdiction. The system is still persevered in; and, from being the most notorious country for robbery in the world, the crime is now unheard of. A man may now travel alone, and unguarded, all over the island, with a bag of money in his hand, in perfect safety. Several friends of ours, lately, though known to be remarkably well furnished with cash, made the whole tour, at different times, without fire-arms, and with only one attendant.

charge, and to furnish them with good accommodations in the Castle St Angelo, and after six months *honourable* imprisonment, to liberate them again!

This is a high premium for robbery and murder! And the more heinous the crimes they have committed, the higher is to be their reward. The chiefs get double as much as the rest. The way for a man to get a pension in Rome, seems to be to turn an assassin.

A considerable body of these banditti have already delivered themselves up upon the faith of this engagement, and are now living in clover at the Castle St Angelo. People flock to see them as if they were wild beasts. We went a few days ago, and I intend to repeat my visit, for their appearance and manners are, beyond description, interesting. We found them amusing themselves in a large open court, apparently enjoying the novelty of their situation, and the notice they attracted. They are a very fine-looking set of men,—fine limbs, fine features, fine flashing dark eyes and hair, and bright brown complexions. Their air and deportment is free and independent, expressing undaunted confidence and fearless resolution. But their countenance!—I can give you no idea of the sinister expression—the confirmed villainy that many of them wore, especially when they talked and laughed.

Their dresses were very rich and picturesque. One of them had a most magnificent embroidered scarf twisted round him, which he laughed as he said he had taken from a lady.

The captain boasted of having killed eighteen men with his own hand. His wife was with him: She is only nineteen, and the most beautiful creature I think I ever beheld. Several people have made presents to these wretches, and more especially to this woman, a practice I must say I think highly reprehensible; and I am afraid the example was set by an English lady of high rank,—whom, as the distinguished patroness of learning, taste, and talent, I should have thought would scarcely have deigned to have become the patroness of thieves.

Several of them had little images of the Virgin and the saints suspended round their necks. One of them took out his little Madonna, kissed it, and said he should never have had any success without it,—that it had often saved his life, and that whenever he wanted any thing, he always prayed to it. Another, being asked what they would do when they were liberated, replied, with a face which it would be vain to describe,—"Oh, we shall repent!"—(*ci pentiremo.*) I wonder if the poor wretches who were executed on the guillotine the other day, deserved it better than those who, in six months, are to be released with free pardons to prey on society again.*

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* Since my return from Italy, I have learnt that Government have not kept their faith with the robbers, and that at the end of twelve months, they were still in the Castle St. Angelo. I leave the whole of this transaction without any comment.

The whole system of the government is marked by the same weakness and incapacity. It would be endless to go into the minutiæ of the mal-administration which pervades every department; but, for example, the petty imposts, absurd restrictions, ruinous monopolies, and frivolous impediments, with which commerce is fettered, act as a complete interdict to it. So many difficulties and perplexities, are in the way of every branch of business, and so many delays and forms, and offices and vexations, have to be passed through in the importation and exportation of every commodity—even of the native produce of the Pope's own dominions, in their passage from one part of it to another—that a man had need of the patience of Job to transact business at Rome.

To give you some faint notion of this; the wine of Montefiascone, though remarkably delicious, is scarcely to be had in Rome at all; and that of Orvietto, though grown at a trifling distance, sells at nearly treble its price on the spot. The Annona laws, with all their absurdities, are still in force, and the popularity of the Pope and his ministers, is by no means increased by the heavy *gabelle* (duties) which their wisdom has seen fit to lay on every sort of article.

Duties carried to excess, equally impoverish the revenue and the subject. The consumption is so materially diminished, that the small quantity used produces far less under an extravagant tax, than a large quantity would under a moderate one; not

to mention the temptation to smuggling, the expence of keeping up a check upon it, and the impossibility of preventing it. Besides, the smaller quantity of your neighbour's produce you import, the less of your's they can afford to take from you; for all commerce is barter. There are many instances of governments acting on this *dog and the shadow* kind of principle; but none, I imagine, ever carried it to more perfection than this. If a merchant from any remote part, chuses to send his wine, or oil, or cheese, or wool, or lint, or cloth, or what not, to this metropolis, he must pay a heavy duty, not only on entering the city, but at every town it passes through: while there are various sapient laws enacted against the exportation of the chief articles of native produce.

The government here looks with a jealous eye on Austria, who intermeddles strangely in all affairs; so much so, that sundry sagacious politicians have predicted that there never will be another *temporal* Pope. Of this, however, I should think, or, at least, hope, there is little probability; for though an ecclesiastical government is, and must be bad, an Austrian one will be ten times worse. It would really be to fall, as they say themselves, "*Dalla padella nelle brace;*" or, according to our homely equivalent proverb, "out of the frying-pan into the fire."

Bad as the Papal government is, indeed, it is by no means so bad as that beneath which the rest of Italy is groaning—Not so bad, for instance, as Na-

ples; or Piedmont; or Genoa, abandoned by English broken faith, to the merciless gripe of Sardinia; or ill-fated Lombardy; or expiring Venice; or even that nice little Duchy of Parma; or the still smaller morsel of Lucca, which have been cooked up to satisfy the cravings of kingdomless Royalty.

Tuscany, upon the whole, has by far the least to complain of. But people in England, who talk of erecting Italy into one great independent kingdom, know nothing of the Italians. They hate each other with a hatred surpassing that of common Christians, and the nearer the neighbourhood the more inveterate the animosity.

Rome and Naples—Pisa and Florence—Florence and Sienna—Modena and Bologna—in short, wherever there are two cities within a reasonable distance of each other, be sure the most cordial detestation reigns between them. A man, from a little town, or village, ten miles off, calls himself a foreigner, and is considered so by the people he comes amongst, just as much as if he came from the other end of the world. A man's *Patria*, in Italy, is the most limited thing imaginable. It is confined to the village which gave him birth.

It is true, that there was, and is, a strong spirit of independence in the north, and, indeed, over the whole of Italy, and it was the want of that principle of union, to which I have alluded, that alone prevented them from asserting their liberty, in that auspicious moment, when the French yoke was taken off, and no other was yet imposed. At present, however, the friends of freedom, or the

faction of the *Carbonari*, as they call themselves, increase every day, and it will be strange, if in Lombardy at least, they do not soon assume courage enough to break their chains.

They want no masters, neither French nor Austrian. "*Ce sono due bestie*," said a Milanese to me, with a bitter gesture of detestation. Of the two, however, the present "bestia," I should suppose, to be by far the most generally and deservedly detested. Such, certainly, was the sentiment of a poor man, to whom I happened to observe, that they had now got the Austrian eagle with two necks, instead of the French with one. "*Si Signora*," he replied, heaving a deep sigh, "*e mangia doppio.*"*

Indeed, the French ought to be beloved at Milan, if any where; for they did a great deal for it—instituted new manufactures—erected new buildings—elevated it into the seat of government, the capital of the kingdom—made the wealth of the country flow into it, and in a great measure sacrificed to it the rest of Italy.

And yet their government was so far from popular, that the moment the terror of their arms was removed, we know that the governor was literally torn in pieces. If, therefore, they were so little liked at Milan, which they had patronized, we may conclude they could not be much beloved at Rome, which

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* And it devours double as much.

they had oppressed; or Venice, which they had destroyed. Much good, however, and much evil may, with truth, be reported of the French; but the good is gone, and the evil remains. At the same time, it must be owned, that if they were equally rapacious and despotic, they were by no means so senseless, as the governments which have succeeded them; and which seem to have vied with each other in the generous design to whitewash their character at the expence of their own.

Independent of this contrast, however, I own I cannot see, that any thing Buonaparte ever did for Italy, was so very surprising. He made himself master not only of the immense revenues of churches and convents, but too often of hospitals; he imposed heavy burdens on the people, and at Rome, at least, reduced many of the nobles to beggary, by exorbitant contributions. Possessed of these immense resources, he made military roads for the progress of his ambition, and built triumphal arches for the gratification of his vanity.

I am aware these observations will give great offence to that numerous body of English, who pour forth unqualified praise of Buonaparte's reign in Italy; and who, while they profess themselves warm advocates of liberty, very consistently eulogize the man who sought to establish universal despotism through blood and carnage—to lay his iron-bound tyranny, not only over the persons, but the minds of men,—over the press, the commerce, and the literature of Europe.

The desolating effects of his reign, I fear, Europe will long feel, in the exhausted resources, increased burdens, and palsied commerce, which weigh down her states; and the hopeless atheism, and dread demoralization, which poison her people.

But I have fallen into a gloomy vein. So adieu!

LETTER XCVIII.

OSTIA.

Our last excursion from Rome was to Ostia. Nothing can be more dreary than the ride to this once magnificent sea-port. Even before you leave the gates of Rome, you find yourself in a desert. You issue out through the Porta San Paola; pass the graves of your countrymen, and the proud sepulchral pyramid of Caius Cestius; the deserted Convent of *San Paolo alle tre fontane*, and proceed through a continued scene of dismal and heart-sinking desolation; no fields, no dwellings, no trees, no land-marks, no signs of cultivation —except a few scanty patches of corn, thinly scattered over the waste; and huts, like wigwams, to shelter the wretched and half-savage people that are doomed to live on this field of death. For, by a strange paradox, man, in order to drag on a miserable existence, is here driven into the very jaws of certain destruction.

The Tiber, rolling turbidly along in his solitary course, seems sullenly to behold the altered scenes that have withered around him. Two thousand years ago, and his shores were blooming in beauty, and crowded with the proud palaces of the great and the gay. Here, it is not only the works of man that have perished; Nature herself seems to have fallen into decay: and the total absence of existing objects, seems to give more place for remembrances.

A few miles from Ostia, we entered upon a wilderness indeed. A dreary swamp extended all around, intermingled with thickets, through which roamed wild buffaloes, the only inhabitants of the waste—sometimes seen breaking through the brake, or treading down reeds, higher than themselves—sometimes swimming across the stagnant waters—in their habits grown amphibious, like the scenes they tenanted.

A considerable part of the way was upon the ancient pavement of the Via Ostiensis, in some places in good preservation, in others broken up and destroyed. When this failed us, the road was execrable.

The modern fortifications of Ostia, appeared before us long before we reached them. At length we entered its gate, guarded by no centinel; on its bastions appeared no soldier; no children ran out from its houses to gaze at the rare splendour of a carriage; no woman stood with the rock and the spindle at her cottage-door; no passenger was seen in the grass-grown street. It presented the

strange spectacle of a town without inhabitants. After some beating and hallooing, on the part of the coachman and lacquey, at the shut-up door of one of the houses, a woman, unclosing the shutter of an upper window, presented her ghastly face; and having first carefully reconnoitred us, slowly and reluctantly admitted us into her wretched hovel.

"Where are all the people of the town?" we inquired.

"Dead!" was the brief reply.

The fever of the malaria annually carried off almost all whom necessity confines to this pestilential region. But this was the month of April, the season of comparative health, and we learnt, on more strict inquiry, that the population of Ostia, at present, nominally consisted of twelve men, four women, no children, and two priests. A body of convicts, whose lives it is found convenient to shorten, are also kept here; but they, with the few soldiers who constitute their guard, were out at labour when we arrived,* the men were roaming about the marshes, shooting birds and buffaloes, and the

* I understand their principal work is at the Stagno, or salt marshes, where, by natural evaporation, the salt is made, (and very bad it is,) that is used in Rome. One of the priests told me, the convict station here was an asylum for criminals, and that guilty of whatever crimes, if they fled here they escaped trial and further punishment, but few or none sought it uncondemned.

woman whom we saw, was literally the only person in this deserted town. Yet it still has three churches, and is the see of a bishop!

The ruins of Old Ostia are farther in the wilderness. The sea is now two miles, or nearly, from the ancient port. The cause of this, in a great measure, seems to be, that the extreme flatness of the land does not allow the Tiber to carry off the immense quantity of earth and mud, its turbid waters bring down; and the more that is deposited, the more sluggishly it flows; and thus the shore rises, the sea recedes, and the marshes extend.

Ostia was originally founded by Ancus Martius,* and it continued to be the only port of Rome, until the time of Claudius, who built Porto, on the opposite bank of the river. The marshy *insula sacra*, in the middle of the river, once sacred to Apollo, and now inhabited by wild buffaloes, divides the two ancient harbours, which Cassiodorus calls the eyes of Rome. After the building of Claudius's new port on the right bank of the river; the left stream, by which Æneas had entered its "yellow" tide, and on which Ostia stands, was quite deserted.

We had intended to have crossed to the Sacred Island, and from thence to the village of Fiumicino, on the other side, where there are said to be

* Livy, l. 1. c. 33. *in ore Tiberis Ostia urbs condita*, &c.

still some noble remains of ancient Porto, particularly of the Mole; but a storm suddenly came on, with such tremendous fury, that it was with the utmost difficulty we could keep our feet, and our plan of crossing the wide mouth of the Tiber, in a crazy boat, was wholly frustrated. Bribery itself would not induce the boatmen to venture.

The hats of the gentlemen were bound on their heads with handkerchiefs, and arm in arm we tried to contend with the fury of the blast, so far as to see the remains of Old Ostia. They are on higher ground, scattered over a green plain, "purpled with vernal flowers." Broken columns of granite, slabs of marble, and fragments of inscriptions, without number, were strewed along the grass. All over it "the turf was heaved" in many a verdant hillock, which seemed to cover the ruins of magnificent temples and palaces.

We saw the fine Roman brick walls of an ancient building, called by the vulgar a temple, and by antiquaries a curia,—but why a senate-house at Ostia? We looked in vain for any traces of the camp of Æneas, which must have been near here; and as for the Numicus—the

"Fontis stagna Numici,"

it is no where to be seen, not even by antiquarian eyes, along the whole extent of coast.

We saw, indeed, the dry bed of a stream, called the *Fiume Morto*, but it is close to, and has evi-

lently been, the bed of the Tiber. Another *Fiume Morto*, the people told us, is in the *Isola Sacra*.

Our examination of the remains of antiquity at Ostia, if any more there be, was, however, abruptly terminated. Obliged to yield to the increasing violence of the storm, we were driven back to the wretched *osteria* we had left. In its large black kitchen, hall, and common apartment, the only habitable place in it, we found assembled some wild, ruffian-looking men, who had sought shelter, like ourselves, from the gale; two of them were playing at the game of Morra, their countenance inflamed with eagerness, and occasionally with passion, as disputes arose about the number of fingers they had shewn.* But no bloody termination ensued. Three or four of their companions were looking on.

They soon resigned to us the dirty table of boards, and the wooden benches; which, except a few crazy stools and empty casks, formed the only furniture of the place; and here we eat the cold dinner we had brought with us from Rome.

The storm also prevented us from visiting the site of Laurentinum, the winter villa of the Younger Pliny,† which is about four miles from hence, on the coast. Some of the walls, I understand, are still standing.

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* For an account of this game, see Letter LII.

† The same so minutely described in l. 2. Epist. 17.

We delayed our departure as long as possible, in hopes the storm would abate; but in vain. We returned at last without having visited the Insula Sacra, or the ruins of the Port, on the opposite shore, where now stands the village of Fiumicino. We consoled ourselves for our disappointment, by the resolution to make another excursion to them from Rome, by the other side of the Tiber; but this, like many such resolutions, has never been accomplished.

LETTER XCIX.

SUNSET ON THE PALATINE.—THE COLISEUM AND THE FORUM BY MOONLIGHT.

On one of those delicious evenings that close the bright and beautiful days of autumn in this country, I lingered on the Palatine until the sun sunk in a flood of light and glory, such as no power of language or of painting can pourtray. Vainly would imagination try to body forth the beauty of an hour like this, beneath the heavenly sky of Italy. The soft mist that floated over the landscape like a silver veil, softened, without obscuring every object, and gave a shadowy beauty to the grey tombs that covered the wide plain of the Campagna; while the hues that painted the Sabine Hills, the purple lights that, fading, blended into distance, and the last crimson glow that was reflected from the tops of the embattled Apennines, altogether formed a picture that would have awakened admiration in the coldest breast.

I stood on the terrace of the Palace of the Cæsars,—on that ancient hill where the Kings of

Rome, the heroes of the Republic, and the imperial tyrants of the world, had successively triumphed and passed away.

The last horizontal beam of the God of Day, darting under the broad shade of the dark pine-tree, fell on the shattered ruins at my feet. Eighteen centuries had now almost completed their course since first his radiance had illumined the golden walls of this magnificent fabric; a thousand years his light had seen them laid in ruins, and still his setting ray seemed to shine with redoubled splendour on the fallen marbles of that proud Fane, within which he was once adored.*

> " Slow sinks, more lovely ere his course be run
> *O'er Latium's desert plains*—the setting sun;
> Not as in northern climes, obscurely bright,
> But one unclouded blaze of living light:
> O'er *Rome's proud seat*, o'er *Tiber's sacred isle*,
> The God of Gladness sheds his parting smile;
> O'er his own regions lingering loves to shine,
> Though there his altars are no more divine."

Transitory as beautiful, the deep glow of the western sky quickly faded away;—the shades of evening rapidly closed around,—no twilight here interposed its meditative hour, but the moon arose with a brightness and beauty unknown to our wintry climate, and the evening star lighted her

* The broken Corinthian columns, and capitals of a temple on this hill, are supposed to be the ruins of the famous Temple of Apollo on the Palatine.

glowing lamp in the west; as beneath their mingled rays, which trembled through the dark shade of the tall cypresses, we slowly passed along the now forsaken triumphal way, towards the Coliseum. Would that I could describe it to you, as it stood in its ruined loneliness amidst the deserted hills of Ancient Rome, surrounded with the remains of overthrown temples, imperial palaces, triumphal arches, and buried thermæ,—mighty even in decay!

The still, pale moonbeam fell on the lines of its projecting columns, range above range, to the lofty attic, in silvery light, leaving the black arches in mysterious darkness.

We passed under the great arch of entrance, crossed the grass-grown area, ascended the long staircases, and traversed the circling corridors. No sound met our ear but the measured tread of our own footsteps, and the whispered murmurs of our own voices. The deep solitude and silence,—the immensity and the ruin of the great fabric that surrounded us, filled our minds with awe; and as we caught the view of the stars appearing and disappearing through the opening arcades—marked the moonbeam illumining the wide range of these lofty walls, and raised our eyes to the beauty of the calm clear firmament above our head,—we could not but remember, that hundreds of ages past, these eternal lights of heaven had shone on the sloping sides of this vast ampitheatre, when they were crowded with thousands of human beings, impatient for the barbarous sports of the rising day,—where now,

only the wild weeds waved as the night breeze passed over them.*

Nature holds her eternal course;—the works of man perish. Earth is strewed over with the mouldering vestiges of his vanity and ambition; and yet, compared with his own little space, how durable are even those mute memorials! How wonderful is the discrepancy between the duration of his works and his own existence. The buildings he raises, the characters he impresses on the page, the colours he spreads on the canvas, the forms he creates in the breathing marble—live; they enjoy a species of immortality on earth, but he passes away like a shadow.

We gazed around us on the gigantic wreck of this mighty fabric; and as we recalled what it had once been;—the long procession of years which had gone by—the silent march of time—the countless generations that had gone down to the dust, rushed forcibly upon our mind. The proud masters of the world were no more; and we, pilgrims from a then despised and barbarous land, were wandering amidst the ruined monuments of their pride and their power, to admire their grandeur, and to mourn over their decay!

We quitted the Coliseum: we passed along the lone track of the Via Sacra, amidst ruined temples, and tottering arches; we beheld before us the once-proud Capitol; we stood in the Roman Forum.

* It was customary for the common people thus to secure places to see the games over night.

How well did this hour of stillness, when nature itself seemed hushed, accord with this scene of ancient glory! How softly the silver moonbeams fell on the Corinthian columns, and broken porticos of the temples, whose very gods are forgotten! How distinctly its clear light marked the dark decaying marble of that proud sculpture meant to immortalize the triumphs of heroes; and how beautifully its pale and mournful ray harmonized with the mouldering arches sunk in earth, like the deeds they commemorate! I could almost have fancied that I saw Time seated amidst the ruins he had made, mocking at their vanity, as he worked at their destruction. Our thoughts turned upon those over whom he had no power,—for whom there is no monument,—but whose memory is immortal on earth; and we felt, not without emotion, that we stood on the venerable soil where Camillus and Scipio, and Brutus and Cicero had trod. Whilst our hearts were touched with feelings such as these, a bell from a distant convent on the Cœlian Hill, which tolled to call the Friars to their midnight orisons, broke upon the silence of night. At the sound, a figure glided from the shade of the Temple of Concord, passed before us like a shadow, and disappeared among the trees. We were somewhat startled at this apparition, which, according to all the rules of romance, should have served as the prelude to some mysterious adventure; but it only served to warn us to go home to bed; and, as it appeared to us no more, nor even condescended

to explain why it had appeared at all, you may conceive it to have been a ghost or a man, a monk or an assassin, as best suits your fancy. Farewell.

THE END.

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